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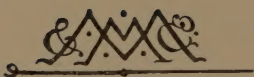
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LORD KELVIN'S EARLY HOME



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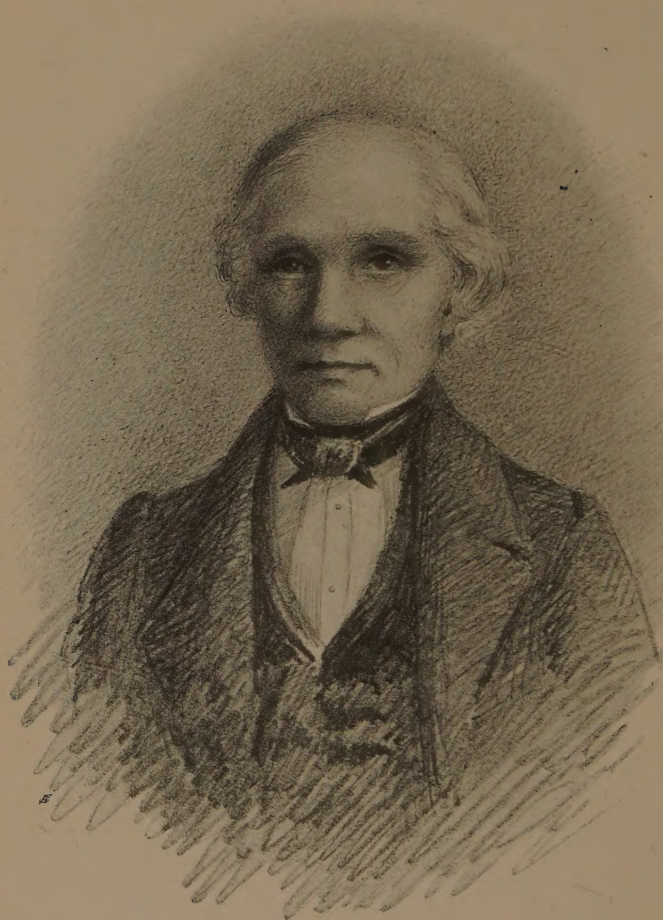
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PROFESSOR JAMES THOMSON, LL.D.

(Lord Kelvin's father)

*From a Pencil Drawing by his daughter Elizabeth, Mrs. King  
Probably about 1848.*

Frontispiece



# LORD KELVIN'S EARLY HOME

BEING THE RECOLLECTIONS OF HIS SISTER THE LATE  
MRS. ELIZABETH KING; TOGETHER WITH SOME  
FAMILY LETTERS AND A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER  
BY THE EDITOR, ELIZABETH THOMSON KING

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM MRS. KING'S OWN DRAWINGS  
AND THOSE OF HER DAUGHTERS



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
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1909



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## PREFACE

THESE Recollections were originally jotted down by my mother in very promiscuous fashion as they occurred to her memory, and were primarily intended for the benefit of her children and grandchildren. During the last two or three years of her life she and I spent many happy hours collecting them from various note-books and stray sheets of paper, classifying and arranging them, and bringing them as far as possible into chronological order. The thought of children and grandchildren was still uppermost in her mind, and many of the details set down may appear too trivial, and perhaps too domestic, for publication. But in view of the world-wide sorrow which was evinced at the death of Lord Kelvin, and the universal and touching tributes to his character as well as to his genius, we, his nephew and

nieces—my brother and sister and myself—feel that the public has become, as it were, a wide circle of friends, and will, like ourselves, treasure even trifles which throw light upon his childhood, his family surroundings, and the influences which helped to mould his mind and heart.

It is with this feeling that we venture to open the door of the sacred past and to introduce these unknown friends to his parental home.

He was the last survivor of the happy and united family whose story is here recorded. The bond between the brothers and sisters remained very strong through life ; and their devoted love for their father's memory has been handed down by them to succeeding generations. So living has the influence of his beautiful life been, even to those who never knew him, that one of his granddaughters can remember how, when she was a very little girl, his painted portrait on the wall used to smile or frown on her according as she was good or naughty, and how the fancied



frown would check the naughtiness, and she would look eagerly to see if the smile had returned.

When, in July 1896, our mother was drawing very near the end of her journey, and was shrinking from leaving the warm human love around her and passing into the great unknown, we whispered to her the name of her father. "Yes!" she exclaimed, "my dear, dear father!" and in her weakness she seemed to be a little child again, rejoicing in the thought of his protecting love. Such fathers help the world to understand the depth of the meaning of the words, "Our Father which art in heaven."

A few family letters have been inserted here and there, in the text or in foot-notes, throughout the Recollections, in the hope that they may be found interesting; and all interpolations are indicated by square brackets.

A short sequel in the form of a concluding chapter (also consisting chiefly of family letters) shows William—the future Lord

Kelvin—fairly launched on his career ; and closes with the death of his father in 1849. This may be considered as the end of the story of the old home, although my uncle continued to occupy the same house in the College Court till the University was removed to Gilmorehill in 1870.

ELIZABETH THOMSON KING.

HARTWELL, WROXHAM,  
*September, 1909.*

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## CHAPTER I

### MY FATHER

My father, James Thomson, was the son of a farmer near Ballynahinch, County Down, and was born in the year 1786. There were four children before him—two sons and two daughters—the youngest of whom was about ten years older than himself. His sisters taught him to read, using for this purpose handkerchiefs on which were printed mottoes and verses composed by the patriots who brought about the rebellion of 1798.

He taught himself arithmetic from a dilapidated copy of Bonycastle which he was lucky enough to find ; not only mastering its contents, but supplying many pages that were wanting. While still very young he was sent to a day school kept by Dr. Edgar, and so far as I know he had no other teaching till he went to Glasgow College. The first day he

was at school he rose to the fourth place in a large class. It was the custom for each boy to spell the number of his place at the end of the lesson. The fourth boy spelt it "fore," and it passed down several till it came to the new boy, who spelt it rightly and took the place. Next day he was first, and very soon he was promoted to a higher class.

When he was a very little boy he heard that the minister was coming to visit the family. The news was alarming, for he imagined he would have to say the whole catechism, besides an indefinite number of psalms and hymns; so he prudently absconded, and it was only after a long and almost hopeless search that his sister found him hidden high among the branches of an old apple tree. The minister was not so formidable after all. He took the runaway on his knee, and stroked his head, and by a few kind words gained the child's confidence, and they had a friendly talk, ending in some religious instruction pleasantly adapted to the youth of the pupil.

My father's family were of Scotch extraction, and left their Ayrshire home in the time of Claverhouse, when they came over to Ulster



and settled on the farm where my father was born. The farm, "Annaghmore," remained in the family till the time of the Irish famine (1847), when Robert Thomson, my father's eldest brother, was obliged to leave it and go to live in Belfast.

There was a sundial in front of the house which excited my father's interest when a boy. He made one as like it as he could, and set it up; but to his mortification it did not show the time correctly. He would not be baffled, however, but set himself to search the cause of his failure; and after pondering the matter diligently for some time, at last, one very hot summer night, as he lay awake thinking on the problem in his bed out in a garden-house, the theory of dialling dawned on his mind; and he soon worked it out till he was able to make sundials to be placed horizontally, perpendicularly, or at any angle whatever. Some of the dials he made at that time still exist. They are merely of slate, with the figures neatly grooved on them by scraping, but they are scientifically true. [They are now in the possession of his grandson, James Thomson, of Newcastle-on-Tyne.]

One winter during my father's boyhood, strange, mysterious noises were heard by persons going along a lane between his father's house and that of a neighbour who lived about two miles distant. They resembled the clanking of chains; and sometimes there were groans, sometimes the snorting and tramping of wild beasts. Terror took hold of the people;—no one would pass that way after nightfall: they even dreaded going at all into the darkness. It was believed that Satan himself was prowling about to lay hold of victims and carry them off to his hot domains. Frightful stories were related by the fireside, and the people's hearts failed them for fear. My father listened eagerly to the rumours, and formed the bold resolution to investigate their truth himself. Accordingly he set off one dark night to traverse the dreaded lane alone. At first there was perfect quiet; but he had not gone far when he heard the rattling of chains; his heart gave a thump and beat hard, but he went on undaunted. The noise became louder; it was the clanking of chains beyond a doubt. Then there was snorting and tramping near at hand. Nothing

had been exaggerated; it was dreadful. He could see nothing; even the road was indiscernible. He felt as if close to the enemy, but he would brave him, and he went forward with outstretched hands. Then a terrific noise made him leap;—it was repeated again and again. But soon he began to recognise it as a familiar sound, and it proved to be only a miserable old horse neighing almost into his very ear—a poor disabled creature, turned out to pick its living by the wayside, with a chain between two of its legs to keep it from wandering too far; and it stood beside him claiming his sympathy with a pitiful neigh! In daylight, the passers-by saw the horse and paid no attention to the chain; but in the dark the clanking was inexplicable, so imagination ran wild; and now the bravery of a little boy liberated a country-side from a baleful superstitious fear.

The Irish rebellion of 1798 left a deep impression on my father's mind. I believe a number of soldiers were quartered on our grandfather's farm, but the sympathies of the family were with the rebels. My father has often spoken to us about the dreadful oppression

under which the Roman Catholics groaned at this time. Indeed, the vexations and disabilities imposed on the mass of the people, the absenteeism of the landlords, the domineering spirit of the Established Church, consisting as it did of the merest fraction of the inhabitants, and the irritating way in which the tithes were collected, produced a state of feeling that naturally led to rebellion ; and though these grievances are now mostly redressed, it is not wonderful that a root of bitterness, the growth of centuries of misrule and spoliation, should be very difficult to eradicate. The cruelties perpetrated by Castlereagh and his officers and soldiers make the blood boil. He used to hang and shoot the rebels without even the form of trial, and Lord Londonderry extemporised gallows in the fields and highways by means of a rope and three poles tied together gipsy fashion. From this invention he got the nickname of "Derry-down-triangle." My father himself saw a poor man, flying from the soldiers, run up to his neck in a large deep pond to hide from them, but they spied his head just above the water and deliberately shot him. Before the battle of Ballynahinch the

rebel army was camping near my grandfather's house, and his daughters secretly carried food to the insurgents, their little brother helping them. Long after these times he wrote an account of the battle to read to the Belfast Literary Society, which was afterwards published in a magazine.

Years rolled on, and the time came for my father to begin his studies in Glasgow University. There were no steamers or passenger vessels plying between Belfast and Glasgow in those days, and the voyage was a formidable and tedious affair, so much so that on one occasion my father and some other students begged the captain to put them ashore on the coast of Ayrshire that they might save time by walking thence to Glasgow, and he complied with their request. As they went on their way they met a stream of well-dressed people coming along the road, and on enquiring what was going on, they were told, "Ou, it's jist the kirk scaling," an answer that at first did not enlighten them, though they soon discovered the meaning of the words. It was Sunday, and the people were coming out of church. It seems that the young men on

board the vessel had lost their reckoning and forgotten the day. While they were taking some refreshment at a roadside inn, a return postchaise drove up and paused to change horses. The wayfarers had their wits about them, and seized the opportunity to make a bargain for a cheap drive to town. One of them was much impressed with the dignity of his position, and kept rubbing his hands and exclaiming, "Only to think of *me* riding in a coach!"

On his first arrival in Glasgow, my father, a young bewildered stranger, was wandering along the Gallowgate towards evening, solitary and disconsolate, gazing about him, and wondering where he could find a lodging, when a man leaning on the closed half door of his shop, and looking out upon the street, observed the tired youth, and in a pleasant voice asked if he could be of use. My father explained his need, and the man replied that he had some rooms to spare which perhaps would suit; would the stranger look at them and try them for the night, if he pleased? He was pleased, and soon he was enjoying a comfortable meal in a pleasant sitting-room, with a



couple of big "mould candles" burning on the table, and a fire of bright Scotch coal blazing on the hearth. I believe he occupied these same rooms each winter of his college course.

At the close of the session on the first of May he always returned to his father's house, and stayed till the middle of October, acting as assistant master in Dr. Edgar's school during the intervening months.

Glasgow was a very different place when my father was a student from what it is now. The ancient university was in High Street, and the College Green, with its groves, and cawing rooks, and beautiful stream, the Molindinar, stretched far away behind the picturesque old buildings. St. Andrew's Square was the fashionable part of the town. It was a country walk to the extensive gardens which spread around the spot where St. George's Church now stands; and to these gardens the townspeople used to resort in the summer evenings to regale themselves with strawberries and cream.

The first time my father saw a steamboat he was walking near the Clyde, but the river

was not in sight. Suddenly he beheld a chimney gliding along behind a hedge, and emitting a huge quantity of black smoke. He had heard of steamboats, of course, but had not realised their appearance; and his wonder was so extreme he remained for a time rooted to the spot where he stood; then, rushing to get a better view of the phenomenon, he saw the vessel paddling towards the city. [It was the *Comet*, of four horse power, which cost £192, and was one of the first steamers ever launched.]

I do not know much about my father's college days, except that he was an exemplary and successful student, and took his degree of M.A. He also attended most of the medical classes, and went through the complete theological course with a view to entering the ministry. When he left the university, however, he was appointed teacher of Arithmetic and Geography in the newly established Institution of Belfast,<sup>1</sup> which in a short time became a college having preparatory schools connected with it. When this change took place my father was given the Mathematical

<sup>1</sup>[The Royal Belfast Academical Institution.]

Chair in addition to the school mastership. It was a good position, and many years of his life passed happily in the discharge of the duties it involved. Both the college and school classes flourished under his care, and vast numbers of his pupils acknowledged in later days the advantages they had enjoyed, and the kindness they had received from him.

## CHAPTER II

### MY MOTHER

My mother's name was Margaret Gardner. Her father was a Glasgow gentleman of considerable means. He went out as a volunteer to fight in the American War of Independence, and in one of the battles a bullet pierced his clothes; but his life was saved by its coming against his large strong silver watch, which is now in my son George's possession, and shows the damage it then received.

He was a good man, I have always heard. His wife was much younger than himself, but she died first. She was Elizabeth Pattison (I am her name-child), daughter of Mr. Pattison of Kelvin Grove. The house still stands and is converted into a museum in the West End Park of Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> I do not know what

<sup>1</sup>[The house has been taken down since this was written.]

year my grandmother and grandfather were married, but my mother was born about 1790, and she was their eldest child. There were three boys younger, and one girl, our Aunt Agnes. The mother died when William, the youngest boy, was born. A very short time before her death her daughter Margaret read to her, at her request, the fourteenth chapter of John; and when I was a little girl I learned it all by heart for my mother, because she had told me about her having read it to her own mother when she was dying.

The charge of the family now devolved on Margaret, then just seventeen—very young for such responsibility as rearing her little sister and the poor motherless baby, besides attending to the general management of the household.

Her father was, by this time, a frail old man needing constant care; and his eldest son John, still but a boy, was unremitting in kind attention to him. When his memory failed he imagined that each day was the Sabbath, and morning after morning the young son guided the aged father's tottering steps to the church doors; when, seeing them closed, the old man turned contentedly home, still leaning

on the arm of his dutiful son. I do not know when my grandfather died, but I think my mother was still in mourning for him when she became engaged to my father.

A cousin of hers—a Scotch minister, Dr. Cairns—was appointed Professor of Logic and Belles Lettres in the newly founded College of Belfast; and soon after he was settled there she went to visit him and his wife.

There were still no passenger vessels then, and people had to make the best of any trading smack that happened to be crossing. To undertake the voyage was really a greater venture, and created much more sensation, than when a girl sets off alone now-a-days for America or India. Great preparations were made for my mother's trip, and friends assembled for the purpose. She had to take her food with her, and this was rather a serious matter, for the voyage might be protracted; so a superabundant assortment of provisions was packed. After much consideration it was decided that a riding-habit was the best travelling dress; but I cannot explain on what principle the decision was come to, unless it were for keeping the feet warm.

[The traveller herself gives the story of the voyage, with all its tediousness and discomfort, in a letter to her sister dated May 26th, 1816, from which the following extracts may be interesting.

“Here I am safely arrived at Belfast. At Bowling Bay we found the ‘Betsey’ and were safely put aboard of her. Much as I had heard of the badness of the accommodation of these Packets the scene presented upon first stepping down to the Cabin far surpassed anything I had imagined. In a place scarcely more than three feet (?yards) square were stowed four children nursing, four able to stand on their feet, eight women and a very big man, besides Dr. Ure, Miss Reid and I; but the night was fine and our spirits had not begun to flag, so we could laugh at the elegance of what was to be our temporary abode. I remained upon deck till the cold forced me to go below; by this time the company had prepared themselves for sleep. As many as could get into holes in the side, which served for beds, had crept in so that the place seemed lined with women and children, as the floor too was covered with them, four of the children being laid on the ground, so that nobody could move without running the risk of treading upon them, of which a scream informed us. With some difficulty I got a seat on the one side of a small board that served as



table, Miss Reid was at the other, a pillow between us to lean our heads on. Sleep was rather a hopeless affair and I kept looking about upon the snoring and half sleeping company. Every thing was so completely new to me that I shall not soon forget the night I spent here. The aforesaid big man, (who by the bye had lain with his head pinioned in at my side so that I could hardly move,) insisted upon lighting a candle to amuse the children; himself he amused by smoking, and when we objected, we were told he did not come here to pay and not be allowed to do as he pleased, and that every one was as good as another. As soon as daylight came in we gladly got upon deck, where we spent the morning. By seven we were the length of Greenock, where the wind totally failed and we had to put in to wait for it; Dr. Ure went ashore, but soon returned and insisted upon taking Miss Reid and me to a Mrs. Monteith's, an old lady, the grandmother of Mrs. Ure, where we were most kindly received, and instead of remaining an hour we were kept the whole day and next night. I felt very unhappy at giving trouble to strangers, but they were so kind I soon did not find myself one. We were to sail at eight in the morning, but before this Dr. Ure heard of another vessel for Belfast where the accommodation was excellent, and by ten we were safely aboard the 'Henrietta,' the Campbeltown Packet, which eight gentlemen had jointly freighted

to go to Belfast instead of Campbeltown where it generally sails to. Every thing now conspired to make our voyage agreeable; the day was fine and the wind fair and a very quick sailing vessel. The Dr. had the *Antiquary* in his trunk, which he obligingly took out for our amusement, and the day passed most quietly. By night we felt ourselves getting into the Sea, I got up at four to the deck; it was a grey morning and had been raining, so I had not the pleasure of seeing the Sun rise. We were just opposite Ailsa Craig; the top was enveloped in thick mist, the base was quite clear, and several vessels were sailing past in different directions. It appeared very grand and I stood looking at it for two hours, but it was rather to keep off sickness than for any great enjoyment I had in the sublimity of the scene. Here I quite fell down and lay wrapped up in some of the sailors' coats in the middle of the rain; they were all very kind to me. I was quite helpless and lay more dead than alive for the rest of the voyage. At one time when I was laid on a bench one of them said to another, 'Now you'll take care of the lady.' 'Oh yes,' he answered, 'I'll see that she does not *rout* over.'

It cleared up a fine day, and the sail up the Lough of Belfast seemed to me most beautiful; we were landed by four in the afternoon and with little difficulty I found my Cousins, where the kindness of my reception soon made me forget my illness. Tell Mr. M'Farlane half a leg of a

hen and half a slice of bread served for provision for my share. The cheese was untouched.”]

My mother made a long stay in Belfast, and took a trip to Dublin, also to the Giant's Causeway. The Scotch young lady attracted much attention, and it was during this visit that she first met my father, who was, as I have said, the Professor of Mathematics in Belfast College. Before she left Ireland they were engaged; and the event came about in this way: Dr. Drennan, a physician, and a highly esteemed friend of my father's, invited Dr. and Mrs. Cairns and their guest to dinner one day, and when he told his wife what he had done, she remarked, “Now you must ask a young gentleman to meet the young lady.” “Oh!” he replied, “I have thought of that; Professor Thomson is coming.” But she was not satisfied, and said: “That won't do; he is so quiet and studious he'll not be much company for her.” Dr. Drennan, however, with a funny look rejoined, “I think you will find it will do very well.” And so it did. The young Professor escorted the young lady home, and during the walk they became engaged.

My father told me these circumstances himself; and Mrs. Drennan, who reached the good old age of ninety-six, used to delight in relating them. I remember my mother taking me with her to call on Mrs. Drennan, and how kind and pleasant she appeared to me, sitting in her bright and comfortable dining-room; and how I admired the lustrous old mahogany furniture.

Dr. Drennan was dead before my day, but his memory was cherished. He was a poet as well as a physician, and to him Ireland owes her beautiful name, "The Emerald Isle."<sup>1</sup>

The Belfast visit ended, my mother returned to Glasgow, and in the next summer holidays (1817) my father followed her to claim her as his bride. She was about twenty-seven when

<sup>1</sup> [In his poem entitled "Erin," written in 1795, the lines occur :—

"Arm of Erin! prove strong; but be gentle as brave;  
And, uplifted to strike, still be ready to save;  
Nor one feeling of vengeance presume to defile  
The cause, or the men, of the Emerald Isle."

And in a note to a posthumous edition, published in 1859, priority is claimed on his behalf for the use of the epithet, which by that time was taking its place in the language as a recognised mean for Ireland.]

she was married. For the wedding trip the couple made a tour in the Highlands, taking a carriage with them and travelling with post horses. The bridesmaid, my mother's sister, accompanied them, as seems to have been the custom at that time. This tour was very expensive, and the young people regretted it afterwards, as it crippled their funds for house furnishing. The bridegroom, of course, bore the bridesmaid's expenses.

It was a very happy marriage. Many have told me that my mother was graceful and elegant, and that she had extremely engaging manners, and a bright prepossessing countenance. In company she was always a centre of attraction.





### LORD KELVIN'S BIRTHPLACE

The creeper-covered houses with arched doors are the two built by Professor James Thomson which "stood alone fronting the open plain with its blue encircling hills." The one to the left was Lord Kelvin's birthplace



## CHAPTER III

### THE DAWN OF MEMORY

I WAS born on a glowing Sunday morning in August [August 9, 1818]. My father often spoke of the beauty of that morning. He had had a long walk by the sea-shore, and on his return he was greeted with the news of the birth of his first child.

At this time my father was engaged in building two houses in what afterwards became College Square. As soon as they were ready he let one and moved into the other; and this is the house in which my earliest personal recollections of life begin. They reach very far back into the dim past.

One winter night, when I was a little more than three and a quarter, Belfast was visited by an awful storm. Our house and the one adjoining it still stood alone, fronting the open plain with its blue encircling hills; and

they were quite unsheltered from the blast, which swept down at times with tremendous force. On that dreadful night I well remember the howling of the wind, the rattling of the nursery windows, and at last the crash, when, in the midnight darkness, they were blown in, and a hurricane of wind and rain rushed fiercely into the room, and blew round about the beds. Every window in the front of the house was shattered. The kitchen, which was built out at the back, had a tall chimney of its own to carry the smoke up to the level of those of the main building. This great chimney was blown down and fell through the roof in ruins on the kitchen floor. The next day was Sunday, and I have the most distinct remembrance of my father carrying me in his arms, wrapped in a large shawl, from one darkened room to another ;—for the shutters were all closely barred, and the storm was still raging, though with abated fury. First he took me to the door of the kitchen and let me see the mass of brick and slate on the floor, and bade me look up through the hole in the roof at the angry clouds scudding across the sky. Next he took

me into the dining-room and showed me the mercury heaving in the tube of the barometer, telling me that the heaving was caused by the wind. Then he opened the instrument and showed me the cup of mercury in which the base of the tube was immersed.

The next event I can distinctly recall is the birth of my brother James—three years and a half younger than myself. I remember being told I had got a brother now, as well as a sister; I remember too the students gathering before the house and cheering lustily in honour of their professor's first-born son. I seem to see the two tiny girls—my sister Anna and myself—watching with wondering interest the nurse washing baby, and the whole appearance of my mother's room rises up as if it were actually before me.

When I was between four and five a little boy who was staying with us took scarlet fever. As soon as the disease declared itself, we three children were sent with our nurse to stay at Professor Cairns's. But the next morning it was found that I had caught the infection, and I was carried home rolled in a blanket. A very dangerous illness followed,

through which my kind mother nursed me with untiring love. My sister and brother escaped, and were soon sent to the country with Sally the nurse, to stay with a Mrs. Rice, who lived at Newtonbreda in a pretty cottage all covered with creepers.

It was at this time that I first became acquainted with grief. Shortly before the illness entered the house, a lovely merry baby, a child of Dr. Montgomery's, had been sent to see us, and we children had been charmed with its beauty and endearing ways. When I was convalescent my mother told me the little thing was dead. I was overcome with sorrow, and wept so convulsively day after day as seriously to impede my recovery, and every contrivance was resorted to to divert my thoughts.

One little mark of maternal affection remains stamped on my memory. Soon after I began to get out, my mother took me to walk round the garden of the Linen Hall. Turning a corner we met a breeze, and she stopped and took off her own shawl and wrapped me in it. During my recovery I hemmed a pocket-handkerchief for my father under her

supervision, and great was my satisfaction when it was finished and she took me downstairs to lay it on his desk for a surprise to him when he should come in. Other memories in connection with this illness are the lovely bunches of grapes pinned to the drapery across the window, and the beautiful flowers decorating the sick-room, and the sputtering of apples roasting before the fire for my benefit. As I got well my little sister and brother were often brought to town that we might have the pleasure of seeing each other through the window, and I used to hold up to their admiring gaze the various toys sent by kind friends for my amusement. It was a joyful day when they came back to their home after all danger of infection was over.

The next event of importance in the family history was the birth of my brother William (Lord Kelvin), June 26, 1824. I remember on the day he was born we were out with our nurse in the beautiful summer sunshine gathering flowers in the meadows around the College buildings, and when we came in with our treasures of daisies and buttercups we were taken to see our new brother, and told

to be very quiet, not to disturb him. I remember, too, the bright Sunday our mother first went to church after the event, and the pretty dress of silver grey she wore. How much I admired her! And what pleasure it gave me to see how kind everybody was, shaking hands with her so warmly and wishing her joy in her little son. And what joy and pride, too, she would have had in him if she had lived to watch his career, even only the progress of his boyhood and early youth!

The winter he was a little baby I used, after Anna and James were safe in bed, to toast my toes seated in a high chair before the nursery fire after I was undressed; and I loved to watch him smiling and cooing on Nurse Sally's lap. How pretty he was, and how good! When he was about two years old an artist, Mr. Warrington, asked our mother's permission to paint him as an angel, and consent having been given, Nurse Sally dressed him in his best embroidered white frock and blue ribbons, and with great pride set off to the studio. On her way she bought little blue shoes and elegant white silk socks for his further adornment, and was much disappointed

when the artist removed his finery, and actually said he preferred the little bare feet.

Admiration and flattery were not lost on little Willie, for it must have been about this time that he was found one day sitting before a looking-glass, complacently saying to himself, "P'itty b'ue eyes Willie Thomson got!"



## CHAPTER IV

### NURSE SALLY

NURSE SALLY was an important person in the household during our early days. She was our father's servant when he first had a house of his own, and she received his bride when he brought her to her new home. Being very trustworthy, she was installed in the nursery when a nursery came to be needed; and there she reigned supreme. I remember her cheerful loving face as long as I can remember anything. Yet her rule was strict, exacting the most implicit and instant obedience. She had a very long feather—a good stiff goose-quill—which lay across two nails above the nursery chimney-piece over an engraving taken from “The Cottar’s Saturday Night,” of the father reading the Bible to the assembled family. This feather was her sceptre of rule and rod of correction; but she

took good care not to let us feel its weight, otherwise it might have lost its terror. If any of us were naughty it was enough for her to look up at the feather with a threatening gesture, to bring the offender at once to repentance. This was the discipline under which the early childhood of Dr. James Thomson and Lord Kelvin was passed.

Once, when we chanced to be left alone in the nursery, my sister and I conspired to take down the feather and experiment on each other to test its power. Accordingly we drew a chair on to the rug and placed a stool on it, upon which I climbed with some difficulty and considerable risk of tumbling over the guard into the fire; and I had just managed to reach the feather when Sally entered the room. Seeing what was going on her face became stern, and we felt she was much displeased. Convicted and ashamed, we tearfully sued for pardon, promising we would never, never do so again. Forgiveness was granted, and ever after the feather held its awful sway.

Order was a very strong point with Sally. She always insisted on our putting by our toys when we had done playing with them; and

even when we were very small we had to fold our clothes neatly when we laid them off, and put everything in its proper place. It was a serious matter if we tore a book, and the damage was always carefully repaired without delay.

But notwithstanding her strictness we loved Sally, and delighted in pleasing her, and our nursery was a happy place under her reign. She amused us with little fairy tales, and sometimes with stories of a more serious nature, such as incidents of the famous siege of 'Derry, the Battle of the Boyne, etc. We used to enjoy our walks with her, for she took us where we liked to go, and encouraged our childish sports. A pleasant recollection of these early days is our going to the milking, and drinking the milk "warm and fresh and sweet and white" drawn foaming from the cow into the lid of the can. The meadows were quite near our house on the willowy banks of the Black Staff, and were our usual afternoon and evening resort in spring and early summer. I can well remember those sunny evenings of long ago—the slanting rays illuminating the peaceful scene, the cows

wading among the long grass spangled with buttercups and waving gently in the breeze, the busy milkmaids with their pails, the quiet river sparkling in the sunset glow, the willows dipping in the stream, and we little children in the midst of all this sweetness and beauty, the happiest of the happy. The picture as it rises before me makes me happy still. These lovely meadows are all built over now, and bustling crowds hurry along the streets.

Sally remained queen of the nursery till I was nearly eleven, and then she married Mr. Law, the principal brassfounder of the town. I was her bridesmaid, and very proud I was of the honour. On that grave occasion I wore for the first time a tiny brooch my aunt had given me, containing my mother's hair set round with pearls. The ceremony was performed by Sally's own minister—a covenanter—in our father's house, on a winter evening, in the presence of a considerable company, Dr. and Mrs. Cairns among the number. The bridegroom gave the bride a handsome gold watch with massy chain and seals, a splendid diamond ring, a topaz brooch set with large pearls, her rich silk wedding dress, and a

complete trousseau. He refurnished his drawing-room for her, and provided her with an extremely handsome solid silver tea-service, and pretty china to correspond. The day after the wedding we went to see her, and found her in silk attire sitting in her pleasant drawing-room, with the new service on the table, from which she gave us a cup of tea with a bit of bridescake.

Fanny, who had for a long time been under-nurse, was promoted, and her sister Rebecca came to fill the second place; but we missed our dear old nurse sadly, and were glad to pay her frequent visits.

She lived in the same house the rest of her days. Her husband, who was an elderly man, died in about twelve years, and she carried on the business after his death.

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST VISIT TO SCOTLAND

IN the summer of 1825 we went to Glasgow as a family on a visit to Uncle John and Aunt Agnes, our mother's brother and sister. A steamboat now plied between Belfast and Glasgow, but so moderate was the speed as yet attained that the voyage occupied nearly four-and-twenty hours, for we sailed early in the evening and did not reach the Broomielaw till about four o'clock the next day, in time for dinner at the usual hour of that period.

William's first birthday occurred while we were in Scotland. He was, as I have said, a most beautiful baby, but for a time he suffered much from teething, so much as to cause considerable anxiety. In after years, when he was becoming a great man, our aunt used to boast that the world was indebted to her because she had saved his life when a baby

by giving him bits of sugar dipped in port wine !

From Glasgow we made two excursions. The first was into Stirlingshire to spend a few days at Dunovan, the country seat of Mr. Scott, an old friend of our mother's.

Our conveyance most of the way was the passenger boat drawn by horses on the Forth and Clyde Canal. It was gaily painted, and had a large cabin with many windows adorned with red curtains. We passed through some locks, and our father explained their use, making us observe the water rushing in, and the vessel floating higher and higher, when the sluices were raised.

During our stay at Dunovan we had pleasant drives all round the neighbourhood, and delightful rambles in the Torwood, where we were entertained by our aunt with many a story about Sir William Wallace and Robert Bruce. One very hot day when resting under the trees we were startled by a peal of thunder, the first I remember having heard. It was the beginning of a heavy storm, which terrified me exceedingly. Not long after, another occurred during the night, which seemed even



more frightful, and overwhelmed me with dread. Our mother knew that such fears sometimes become a bondage, and she tried to banish my terror by inspiring me with admiration of the grandeur of the storm. She induced me, instead of hiding my face, to look up at the sky, and watch the beautiful lightning flit from cloud to cloud ; she told me thunder was the voice of God, and impressed me with the feeling that the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. Afterwards she taught me texts about thunder and lightning.

There was to be a dinner party one day ; and the elder children, ourselves and those of the house, were dressed and sent into the drawing-room to await the arrival of the company. No one was looking after us, and of course we got into mischief. A silver ink-stand stood on one of the tables, and we set about examining the bottles ; and by the time the guests began to arrive streams of ink were flowing down our white frocks, and forming pools on the carpet ! To our disappointment and the disgust of the nurses, we were hurried away, stripped of our spoiled finery, and ignominiously put to bed.

The next excursion was to Bothwell, Lanark, and the Falls of Clyde. It was not intended that any child should be of the party, but in the early summer morning, when the little ones were assembled on the doorstep to say "Good-bye," I burst into tears, and the heart of Aunt Agnes was so touched that she entreated I should be taken, engaging to take the entire charge of me and let me trouble no one ; so I was speedily got ready and away we drove. I can recall the beauty of the morning, the sweet freshness of the air, and the loveliness of the scenery on either side as we bowled swiftly along in our open carriage, where I sat in exuberant happiness between my parents ; Uncle John on the opposite side, chucking me under the chin from time to time, as I chattered gaily, and saying, "Eh ! Leesbeth, see what you get by *greeting*."

We visited the Duke of Hamilton's Palace and saw his picture gallery. Two pictures I distinctly remember. Daniel in the lions' den, by Rubens, strongly impressed me ; and a portrait of one of the young lords I thought quite beautiful. We spent some time in Lanark, staying in a hotel. One day we

visited Owen's schools. I had never before seen any school, and it was with great interest I watched the classes come forward and heard them examined. A long day was spent in the grounds of Bothwell Castle. I saw Bothwell Brig, and the story of the battle was graphically narrated to me on the spot by my aunt. Another day was spent rambling about the Falls of Clyde, and most lovely were the banks in all the glory of July. I have still the feeling of the luxurious summer air of that day, of the sunshine glittering through the foliage, the song of the birds and the hum of the insects as we wandered along the rocky paths, and then the rush of the water when we neared the Falls.

Again I visited the Falls, when I was a bride; then they were in their winter glory. Again the sun shone in all his splendour, but it was a December sun, and his radiance illuminated a snowy landscape. Long shining icicles hung from the crags; the crisp ground and the frost-spangled leaves, now fallen and dead, crackled under our feet; and every branch and every spray bore its lovely burden of glittering snow, which fell

upon us like showers of diamonds as we passed.

But to return to the childish days. Before we left Glasgow an elderly lady, a cousin of my mother's, wishing to be kind to us, took Anna and me to a toyshop, and told us to choose what we liked. The shop was in the Candleriggs, and to this day I remember my wonder at the strange name of the street. We surveyed with bewilderment the ravishing beauty of the multifarious toys that surrounded us. At last my affection went out to a curtained bed containing two minute dolls sweetly sleeping in each other's arms. I positively fell in love with the small plaything, and declared my choice without hesitation. My grief, and I fear my indignation, knew no bounds when I was called a silly child to choose such a foolish, useless thing, and I was not allowed to have it, but a leather hand-bag was given me instead, which I have no doubt cost ten times as much as the object that charmed me, but it had no value in my eyes, and I felt no gratitude to the giver, only a sense of disappointment and wrong at having lost something that delighted me. I was

called naughty as well as foolish, and an intended kindness was turned into a lasting pain. Anna got a little box of sweets nestling among pink cotton-wool, with a picture of St. Paul's on the lid, and she was happy and contented, and her goodness was contrasted with my badness, till I became as wretched as a little child could be ; and by the time we were taken back to our mother we were both crying, and my poor little face was all swollen and disfigured with utter misery, and I felt myself a wicked sinner, though I did not know exactly what I had done that was wrong. But our mother was a wise and gentle comforter to her little girls.

## CHAPTER VI

### EARLY EDUCATION

ON my brother James's fourth birthday, February 16, 1826, John was born; consequently James was told that the baby was his birthday present, and he used to sit on the stairs and tell the ladies, who called to enquire for the mother and child, that he had got a birthday present and its name was Nebuchadnezzar. Our father had told him so to see if he could say the long word distinctly.

While my mother was laid aside my irregular French verbs were a sad trouble to me. Some of the idioms too in my translation were an utter puzzle. I was reading the history of William Tell, by Florian, and right glad I was when she could help me again; for I was by far the youngest pupil in Monsieur D'Oisy's French class which I was attending.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[A letter from Robert Thomson of Annaghmore to his sister Mary, who was married and settled in America, gives a description

It was our mother's habit to devote some hours every morning to the instruction of her children, and I, as the eldest, was her first pupil. I could read as long as I can remember, and was accustomed from very early days to stand at her toilet-table and read a psalm to her while she dressed her hair.

She had the most beautiful hair, and I remember how it shone like a golden waterfall, and curled round her hand as she passed the comb through it; and how she tried to suppress any wayward ringlet which would assert itself about her forehead. For the fashion in those days was to wear smooth artificial "fronts" covering the natural hair, and my mother's friends used to remonstrate with her and urge her to get one; until at last she yielded, and it was a vexation to me every morning to see the pretty golden locks carefully tucked away and hidden under the

of their youngest brother's family about this time, which is rather amusing, and corroborates these recollections: "Brother James and his family are well. Have five very fine children, two girls and three boys. They are handsome and kind, and fond of their friends; and, what is more, are wonderfully apt in learning; but I don't think it strange, as both father and mother are drilling them. Their mother has a good education, and Elizabeth speaks French well."]



ugly hard brown front. However, it was soon discarded.

One beautiful afternoon, in the early summer of that same year, Anna and I accompanied our father and mother in a delightful drive along the coast some miles beyond Holywood, and came to a thatched cottage more lovely, as it seemed to me, than anything I could have imagined. It was clustered over with roses, honeysuckle, and jasmine ; flower-beds were cut in the grass before the windows, and the garden and little lawn were encircled by picturesque fir trees, through which, beyond the sloping meadows, were disclosed pretty views of the lough and the opposite coast, with Carrickfergus and its old castle standing out in bold relief ; while far away to the right the open sea was spread out, with Ailsa Craig like a little cloud floating on the distant horizon. The inside of the house pleased us just as much with its quaint low-ceiled rooms, and delightful seats in the deep window recesses. It seemed too much happiness when we were told this was to be our summer home. Craig-a-vad, or Rock of Seals, the

place was called. On a very hot day soon after, we went down as a family to take up our abode there. As we drove along I remember my father holding out his little pocket thermometer at arm's length, and telling us it stood at  $81^{\circ}$ . Then he made us examine the thermometer, and showed us that the mercury expanded with heat, and that the amount of the heat was measured by the degrees we saw marked on the ivory scale.

On our arrival we children were turned out into the pleasant kitchen-garden, with its grassy walks, homely flower-borders, screen of trees, and brook tinkling under their shade ; and here the summer afternoon was passed in the earnest but vain endeavour to catch birds by throwing salt on their tails from our well-stocked pinafores.

I was reading Goldsmith's *History of England* with my mother at this time, and if she went up to town for a day I had to read my portion by myself and tell her about it on her return. We always walked a good way to meet her in the evening, and drove back with her, a joyous little party with much to tell her after her absence. Here I first

read *Robinson Crusoe*. Many happy hours I spent on my knees, intent upon the story, with the big book placed before me on the deep window-seat ; above me the roses waving against the glass and filling the room with fragrance.

My first and only quarrel with my brother James happened while we were living in this cottage. We were out walking in the fields with our mother, and I found a large orchid flower. I did not remember having seen one before, and I admired its pale blue spike of blossom exceedingly. James admired it too, and snatched it out of my hand. I was enraged, and rushed to tell our mother of the robbery. She was much displeased, and when we got home she took him to her own room and punished him. What an agony of self-reproach and repentance overwhelmed me when, standing outside the door, I heard his cries ! I ought to have been punished too as a tell-tale, but I think I suffered as much as if I had been beaten half a dozen times. By and bye she came away and left him alone ; then I crept into the room, bringing him the flower ; but it was too late ; he did not care for it. He sat

bundled up in the corner of the sofa, sobbing as if his little heart would break. I pleaded hard that he would take the flower, but it remained unheeded. At last we were friends, kissed, and were comforted. Except this one quarrel, the summer has left no memory but of joy and sunshine.<sup>1</sup>

Even the few wet days made only an interesting change. At all times we had plenty of occupation and amusement. Pleasant lessons, rambles on the hills, gathering shells on the sands, and blackberries among the rocks; sometimes there was the delight of finding a bird's nest hidden among the whins and

<sup>1</sup> [Fifty-eight years later, at a time when my mother was very ill, my uncle James wrote :

“ 2 FLORENTINE GARDENS,  
GLASGOW, 3rd December, 1884.

“ MY DEAR NIECE ELIZABETH,

I sympathise very much with your mother, my sister, in her suffering and weakness . . . I have happy memories of all our associations as sister and brother, and as members together of our father's family, from our nursery times forward. I have much memory of happy intercourse and none at all of discord.

I hope she will be spared to us all for a long time yet.

I am, Your loving uncle,

JAMES THOMSON.”

So even the one quarrel over the orchid had faded from his mind.  
—E. T. K.]

brambles, and of peeping in gently not to disturb the mother bird ; sometimes when she was absent we saw the little ones opening their mouths wide in the expectation of something good. Our own sweet mother seemed to be always among us, and very often our father. As the autumn advanced, I have a very charming remembrance of the happiness of the evening hour, when we were all gathered round the table, baby John on our mother's knee, and Willie on our father's. The table-cover was removed and half-crowns and teetotums were spun on the smooth mahogany, and every face sparkled with glee. There were no thorns on these roses.

The early part of the summer of 1827 was spent at Bangor. Our house was opposite the quay, and I recollect seeing cattle slung on board sailing-vessels for exportation, and grieving over the painful struggles of the poor animals.

Aunt Agnes spent the summer with us here ; and Uncle Thomas, our mother's brother, came from Brazil and stayed with us also. He brought very beautiful gold necklaces to Anna and me of Brazilian manu-

facture; and lovely carved ivory fans, which, however, we were not allowed to use till long after. He had a black man-servant called Carlos, who often went with us in our walks, and entertained us with his strange talk.

Much of my time and Anna's was spent in collecting shells, of which a considerable variety is to be found at Bangor; and two elderly ladies—Miss Gibsons—often asked us to tea, and not only taught us to name and classify our findings, but added to our store some of which they had duplicates. This was the beginning of a very nice collection of land and sea shells we gradually formed, which was a source of great interest during our youth.

In August our sister Margaret was born. Soon after her birth a new church was completed, in the erection of which our father had taken great interest, liberally contributing towards the defraying of its cost, and, in conjunction with other gentlemen—especially the Mulhollands—giving much time to oversee the work. The famous Dr. Chalmers was invited to come from Scotland to open the church, and he stayed about a week with us on the occasion. There were breakfast parties,



lunch parties, dinner parties ; and the usually quiet house was constantly filled with company. Dr. Chalmers baptized our little sister in the midst of a large circle of friends assembled in the drawing-room. When he was going away he gave me sixpence to divide among us. It was the very first money we had ever possessed, and we had much consultation as to how it should be expended. I am almost ashamed to say that, after pondering the matter well, we decided unanimously to buy rosy-cheeked apples with it, and Sally took the four of us in a body to the fruit market to make the purchase. Willie was about three and a quarter when he gave his vote in this important matter.

Dr. Morgan, of Lisburn, was called to be the minister of the new church, and very soon he began a Sunday class to which Anna and James and I were sent. As an exercise we had to write what we remembered of the afternoon sermon ; and this was a pleasant way of spending the Sunday evenings, while our parents sat beside us reading, and sometimes giving us a little help. James's performances must have been very small indeed,



for he was not six when the class began. But he was a great adept at *printing*. When he was a very delicate little boy of about five, of his own accord, by way of Sunday employment, he set about printing the thirteenth chapter of Matthew with ink on large sheets of letter-paper which he got our mother to rule for him; and he perseveringly got through the long chapter without any help.<sup>1</sup>

Our father read with us regularly every Sunday morning some chapters in the Old Testament, and in the evening some in the New. He read out of his big Family Bible, the youngest looking on with him while the others had their own books. He read five verses consecutively, and the children took their turn in order of age, with a smaller number of verses according to the size of the reader. I read four.

In our father's study a "press" was given us for our own books. These gradually comprised a considerable variety, of which I may name the following: All Miss Edgeworth's books for the Young, Mrs. Barbauld's *Hymns*

<sup>1</sup> [From an old letter of his mother's it appears he was bribed with a sixpence.—E. T. K.]

*and Early Lessons, Robinson Crusoe, The Little Library, Sandford and Merton, Fairchild Family, Swiss Family Robinson, Evenings at Home, The Library of Entertaining Knowledge, The Wonders of the World*, and books of travel and arctic voyage.

For many years we had no other teacher than our father and mother, except for French and Writing, Music and Dancing.

As Professor of Mathematics, during the winter months our father lectured every morning from eight till nine, and from eleven till twelve in the forenoon.<sup>1</sup> In the afternoon he was occupied with the school classes ; and, these ended, he regularly went to the News

<sup>1</sup>[My mother has often told us that her father was in the habit of rising at four to work at his books. Some coffee and cream and a spirit lamp having been put ready for him, he made himself a cup of hot coffee before beginning. In these quiet morning hours he got through an immense amount of work before his professional duties began. His various books on Arithmetic, Mathematics, Geography, etc., went through very many editions, which constantly needed revising and bringing up to date, so that he was occupied with them more or less to the end of his life, when his sons took up the task. These works brought in a considerable income for many years, and my mother used to look on her share of this money as sacred. It was put aside to be devoted to some special and unselfish purpose, and at her death we found in her jewel box an envelope containing a few sovereigns, and labelled "My dear father's book money."—E. T. K.]

Room and the Commercial Buildings for a little while. Our mother was always waiting for his return with the children about her. Very eagerly we listened for his knock, and ran to open the door, and helped him to take off his things; and then heard some stories from him of what was going on in the world.

From the dawn of my memory the Greek War of Independence was of absorbing interest, and numbers of British subjects went out as volunteers to help the insurgents. Among them was Mr. Emmerson, one of my father's most distinguished students; and his graphic letters naturally intensified the interest with which our father marked the course of events. This interest he passed on to us by the lively stories, in which he described the brave deeds and terrible sufferings of the Greek patriots and the poor peasants who fought with them; and thus he early roused our enthusiasm for liberty and our hatred of oppression. He told us that sometimes a hundred Greeks would drive back thousands of assailing Turks, thus emulating the deeds of their noble ancestors; and once a party secured their wives and children in a large building

while they fought till most of them were killed, in the vain effort to withstand their foes; and when they could hold out no longer, with a shout of "Liberty or death," they blew up the building, killing themselves, along with their wives and little ones, as well as a great number of their enemies. The siege of Missolonghi, the frightful sufferings bravely borne by the inhabitants, and its final overthrow, were often told; and the recitals filled our young hearts with sympathetic joy or sorrow as the tide of war turned for or against the Greeks.

After dinner we children came down again, and a bit of bright burning "cannel coal"<sup>1</sup> was put on the fire, which blazed up and filled the room with dancing light; the globes were placed on the table, and we gathered round; little Willie, and sometimes James also, on the table beside the globes, while our father explained their use and taught us to work out problems on them. He also led us quickly and easily through the difficulties of arithmetic, so that we soon mastered all the rules. William was scarcely four when he began

<sup>1</sup> [A Scotch term supposed to be derived from *candle coal*.]





RELICS OF THE PAST

to take some part in these cheerful after-dinner lessons, and from the very first he showed the wonderful mental capacity with which he was endowed.

What lovely memories rise up as I recall that dear fireside of long ago—our father and mother sitting there amongst us !

When my father died I wrote from Jamaica begging that the old brass fender, so precious in my eyes from the fond associations that clung to it, should be given to me, and I got it when I came home. But alas ! it was sold when we left Glasgow, and to the present day I cannot think of its loss without painful regrets. But I possess many things entwined with the tender memories of the past. Among them are the dear old globes ; and the little thermometer in its worn leather case, which our father always carried in his pocket ; and Buffon's *Natural History* with coloured plates, which I well remember his often showing us when we were little things sitting on his knee ; and some quaint old china figures, one of which was broken by William when a baby, and afterwards cemented, and which is perhaps more valued for the scar it bears.



## CHAPTER VII

### RECREATIONS

EVERY Saturday from very early days we were accustomed to spend an hour or two at Dr. Cairns's, and lunch there. Mrs. Cairns was a very kind and genial old lady, and we were very fond of her. James had a pet goat that always accompanied us on these occasions, and feasted on apples and other fruits. This was an African goat, a beautiful creature given him by our aunt. It was jet black, with curly hair, and was called Bonita, which in Spanish means Beautiful. It knew each of us, and used to come at our call, and to follow its little master in his walks. But poor Bonita had a sad end. We happened to have a vicious cow, and Bonita went too near it, and got a kick which caused her death soon after.

We were often asked to take tea at Mrs. Cairns's, and these were merry evenings.

Though she had no children of her own she loved children, and could enter into their sympathies. Dr. Young, the Professor of Moral Philosophy, an old bachelor, lived in Dr. Cairns's house, and he too was so kind that we looked on him quite as a playfellow. He allowed us to invade his library, and even to hide the thimble in his slipper or pocket, or, still more wonderful, in one of the cells of his desk, while he calmly continued his studies apparently unconscious of the little hands fumbling about him. By and by he would suddenly catch somebody, and set the rest running away in merry laughter. After that, books were thrown aside, and "Blind Man's Buff," "Puss in the Corner," and other lively games followed, in which, to our great delight, he joined as heartily as any.

Hallowe'en was merrily observed in our home as far back as I can remember. Some children were invited to spend the evening with us, and both father and mother gave themselves up to direct the sports. After tea the dining-room table was moved aside, a sheet was spread on the carpet, and a very large tub half full of water, and an immense tray of

apples of different kinds, were placed upon it. Then our father, who always presided at this part of the entertainment, threw a quantity of apples into the tub and set them whirling rapidly with a potstick. The children stood round, and one after another in regular order mounted a chair and dropped perpendicularly among the dancing apples a fork handed by our father. If it caught one, that one became the property of the child who dropped the fork. Sometimes it came up with two on its prongs, and then there was great cheering, or if it brought up a specially large and beautiful apple—such were called the prizes. A blank, or a poor little misshapen thing, called forth groans or laughter. For every apple taken out a similar one was put in from the tray. At the end the apples each had caught were counted, and the child who had most was proclaimed winner of the game, and they all took their winnings home with them. Next came the burning of nuts, and our mother invented amazing stories to correspond with the freaks of the pairs of nuts as they burned. Next our fortunes were tried by interpreting the forms that shaped them-

selves in a glass of water when the clear white of an unboiled egg was dropped into it from the shell. To do this properly a very small round hole was neatly pierced at each end of the egg. A fine imagination was needed for the game. This our mother possessed, and we were greatly delighted with her interpretation of the dim imagery that evolved itself in the glass.

After some more old Scotch observances peculiar to the evening, the entertainment ended with a lively game of "Blind Man's Buff."

I think I should add that our way of catching the apples with a fork was only a substitute invented by our father for the orthodox Scotch "ducking"—that is, plunging in the head and seizing them with the teeth to bring them out.

Easter Monday is another happy childish memory. We were very friendly with our doctor's family. There were four daughters, the youngest about two years older than myself. I was very fond of her, and never tired of her stories, and we all rejoiced when they came to call on us with their governess, an

accomplished lady, sister of Sheridan Knowles. For successive years we were invited to spend a whole long day with them in their large schoolroom at the top of their father's house in High Street. The morning was devoted to the dyeing of eggs in many gay colours, and afterwards our names and various devices were drawn on them with spirits of salt by Miss Knowles. Each child was given half a dozen of these eggs in a pretty little basket to keep till Easter Monday. When Monday morning came, Miss Knowles and her four pupils called for us at eight o'clock, and away we went with our baskets of eggs to breakfast and spend the day at Mr. Templeton's. Mr. Templeton lived in a nice old-fashioned house about two and a half miles from Belfast; he was a botanist, and had beautiful large gardens containing many rare plants; and he had lovely meadows all round the house, bordered with magnificent trees of ancient growth, and mossy banks starred with daffodils and primroses. In these meadows, among the fresh young grass, we tossed our eggs to our hearts' content till they were all broken, but it was astonishing how long they lasted. In the

evening our mother and father came out to tea, and in the dusk we all walked home together laden with flowers—wonderful ari-culas and pansies and anemones, and other fragrant beauties of the garden blooming at that season.

I remember Dr. Drummond giving a course of lectures to ladies on botany, which my mother attended, and afterwards retailed to us by degrees ; and in our country walks she used to show us the parts of the flowers, and teach us how to classify them according to the Linnæan system.

Madame Malibran made a great sensation in Belfast within my memory. My father and mother, like their friends, were to have gone to her concerts ; but a special case of distress came under their notice just at the time, which they wished to relieve, and I heard them talk it over and decide on giving up the concerts, and disposing of what they would have cost in this other direction.

Paganini visited Belfast during my childhood, and my father was so struck with his performance, which seemed to him really

miraculous, that as long as he lived he spoke wonderingly of it.

I remember Mrs. Elizabeth Fry coming to Belfast, and my mother being much interested in meeting her and hearing her lecture.

A great ventriloquist, who had come to the town for a few weeks, was once got to perform in our drawing-room. He pretended, or rather by his art made us believe, that robbers or desperadoes of some sort were forcing their way into the house, and we were quite frightened by the scuffle and noise we heard on the stairs. Servants seemed to scream and pistols to be fired, and my father hurried out to see what could be the matter; but he found nobody outside, and everything quiet.

We were once taken to the theatre to see Ducrow and his horses and other wonders that he exhibited, and we felt as if we were witnessing a scene in the *Arabian Nights*. Our father read these wonderful stories to us when we were very young. This treat was reserved for the hour after dinner, when the children were gathered round the parents for a little while before going up to bed. Sometimes our father lay on the sofa while he read, and



the listeners clustered at his feet, except Willie, who usually lay with his little fair head nestling on his father's breast. These readings were an era in our childhood, and filled our minds with the wildest fancies. We lived in an ideal world—every spot was peopled with imaginary beings of superhuman power, and each of us had hundreds at command. Those who inhabited the chimney were called “Wee Tories.” They were the wicked ones. The battles and doings of these creatures of our fancy formed for a time a never-failing subject of conversation among us; and we were so naughty as to impose on the credulity of our little brother John, and would sometimes tell him we would make the “Wee Tories” bite or pinch him if he did not obey our behests.

He was a very sturdy, rosy-cheeked little fellow, with a warm honest heart, but a strong passionate temper which his elders now and then, I am ashamed to say, took pleasure in provoking for the sake of hearing him “roar.” His roar commonly soon subsided into what we called a “bum,” and if something caught his attention it would cease altogether, though he was not yet “good”; then we would say,

“John, you are forgetting to bum,” and so set him off again ; and we never let him alone till he went to Sally and said, “I *will* be good.” Then she kissed the good boy, and the ruffled temper was quite smoothed. But really there had been very little wrong. In politics the little gentleman was a Radical. Once when there was a dinner party, and the children came down to dessert, one of the guests, who was a Tory, asked him to sit on his knee and have some fruit from his plate. John accepted the offer, and was kindly supplied with the good things he liked best. He ate as much as he cared for ; then sliding down from the gentleman’s knee, and looking boldly in his face, he announced, “I’m a Radical Reformer.” As he grew older he was a most straightforward, brave, manly boy.

The summer of 1828 was spent in a nice house in Donaghadee. The back was towards the sea, with no road between. In front there was a beautiful lawn laid out with flower beds. Anna and I had skipping ropes, in the use of which, by dint of diligent practice, we became remarkably proficient ; Anna especially, who sometimes kept up a thousand

without either tripping or losing breath. Here we had many playfellows; hitherto we had been accustomed to depend almost exclusively on ourselves. A family named Haliday, from whom we had the house, lived near. There were many children, both boys and girls, lively and good-natured, but rough and boisterous. There was also another family within the same enclosure as ourselves, for the houses were semi-detached. Here there were three little girls with whom we played a great deal. We found them delightful companions, and many were the skipping-rope contests we had, in which I think I am safe in saying Anna was always victorious.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GATHERING CLOUDS

LITTLE MARGARET had become a lovely, merry baby, and we were all very proud and fond of her ; but she had fits when about seven months old which became more and more frequent and dangerous. At Donaghadee she was so ill she was never dressed, only rolled in a blanket, so that when a fit came on she might be quickly plunged in a warm bath. Poor little thing, she was sadly changed. Instead of responding to our caresses with answering smiles, she noticed no one, but lay almost lifeless on her mother's or Sally's lap, unable to hold up or steady her pretty head. A change being recommended for her, we moved to Bangor for some weeks in autumn ; and before settling in town we spent about a fortnight at Billy Fulton's cottage, two miles from Bangor, beautifully situated on

high ground commanding a magnificent sea view. There, I remember great happiness, making clay pottery. Several of us were engaged in this industry, but I was by far the most extensive manufacturer—as might be expected, being the eldest—and I produced a large assortment of cups and saucers, teapots, plates, etc., with artistic designs traced on them with a pinhead. These were greatly valued at our plays in winter. I may add that the duck pond was our place of business.

Meanwhile little Margaret had improved in health to some extent, but the cloud still hung over the house, and I can recall the sad anxiety of our father and mother, and the longing of the children to see the little sister well again. But this was not to be. Though the fits gradually ceased, and colour tinted her cheeks, and smiles again played on her lips, she showed no signs of intelligence. She never recognised anyone, and she never spoke, though it was evident she could hear. As time went on, she became healthy, and was able to run about, always laughing merrily as she ran, and hope was entertained of the

restoration of her mind ; but in 1831 she died of water in the head, at the age of three years and nine months, just a year after our dear mother had been taken from us.

Nothing specially outstanding in the winter of 1828-9 occurs to me, except that our mother took great pleasure in equipping her family for the cold weather. Most of the garments were made by her own dear hands. She gave Anna and me pretty scarlet cloaks and white beaver hats, and white frocks ; and John and Margaret snug red pelisses to match. I do not remember what James and Willie had ; but I do remember wondering a little to hear our mother boast that she was a virtuous woman, for her household was clothed with scarlet !

In February, 1829, Robert was born. Our mother was very ill, and I remember the awful stillness and gloom of the house. To add to the distress, the baby took fits when it was three weeks old. It was on a Saturday night. A Roman Catholic woman named Helen had been got to nurse the infant, and her agony was so terrible at the thought of its dying unbaptized that our father went out

before dawn on Sunday morning to bring Dr. Morgan to baptize it.

Our mother gradually recovered a small measure of health, and in the early summer a pleasant house was taken at Hollywood, to which she was removed, but it was some time after her removal before she could sit up. By slow degrees, however, she gathered strength to walk a little in the fields, and sit out on fine days; and in autumn she seemed pretty well, and became very cheerful and bright, like her old self. She began even to walk considerable distances, with the help of a little portable chair which her children carried for her in turns, playing around her while she rested. But, alas! her spirits got the better of her; she began to venture too far and stay out too late, and brought on spitting of blood. She was then taken back to her own house in town. The doctors strongly recommended that she should winter in a warm climate, but she could not be induced to leave her husband, whose duties did not permit him to accompany her; and she promised to take the greatest care of herself, and never go out except on the very finest days.

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We were very happy to have her among us at home.

About this time Anna and I had lessons from Sheridan Knowles in reading and elocution. We learned to recite in grand style a great many pieces of poetry, and read with him various books, or rather parts of books, reading aloud, of course.

Dr. Bryce of the Belfast Academy<sup>1</sup>—a great friend of Miss Edgeworth—had always taken a keen interest in our education. I recollect when I was very little, his coming sometimes to oversee the lessons my mother was giving, and his giving me some instruction himself. I think it was this winter he formed a Latin class for little boys and girls. At any rate it was this winter that Anna and I joined it. Anna was quite the youngest in the class, and was scarcely able to overtake its business; but I learned pretty easily, and was generally at the top. I still possess a copy of Eutropius inscribed as the first prize.

Miss Scott of Dunovan (where the ink catastrophe already mentioned occurred) came

<sup>1</sup> [Uncle of the Right Hon. James Bryce, British Ambassador in America.]

about the beginning of October to stay with us for a long visit. She arrived early in the morning, and my father and aunt went to the quay to receive her ; and my mother rose for breakfast that morning, a thing she had not done for months. O, how proud and happy her children were to see her down, with her bright morning face, and looking so sweet in her white dressing-gown, and pretty cap and shawl ! We clung around her and could not make enough of her. There she sat among us again by the cheerful dining-room fire, all ready for her expected guest, her table well spread, and the shining brass tea-urn making merry music in the middle. This was the last time she presided at her own breakfast table.

On New Year's day, 1830, there was a family dinner at Dr. Cairns's. Several of us children were at it,—the elder four,—and our mother was carried from house to house in a sedan chair. The houses were very near. On the first Sunday in the year, the Communion was held in Dr. Morgan's church, and she ventured out. It was the last time.

I cannot remember the fluctuations of her

illness. Anna and I were attending Dr. Bryce's daily Latin class, and I recollect being continually asked how our mamma was; and sometimes she was better, sometimes she was worse. Soon after the new year the drawing-room was made her bedroom, and intimate friends were taken up to see her, and Dr. Cairns and Dr. Morgan often came to read and pray with her.

One evening, in the beginning of May, the whole seven of us were brought in to see her. The beams of the declining sun were streaming through the partially closed shutters. She was in bed, propped up with pillows; her cheeks were red with the hectic flush, and her eyes shone bright as she turned yearningly from one to another of the little group around her bed,—two of them in arms. She struggled to speak, but she could not, and we were soon taken from the room. Another evening I stood at her bedside, holding a cup of liquid with which the nurse wetted a feather to moisten her lips. One of the windows was wide open with blind half down, and the sunlight poured in warm and bright on the carpet, nearly touching the bed. The colour was almost

gone from her cheeks, but her eyes were still full of light, and rested on me with a look of wistful pity and longing that filled me with wondering awe. No one was in the room except the nurse and me. Soon my father and aunt came up, and I was sent away. One day a little after, I was sent a message upstairs, and passing along the drawing-room landing, was frightened to see my beautiful father, so tall and strong, standing outside the door pressing his head against the wall. He did not notice his little daughter, and I stole softly away. When I passed again he had mastered the paroxysm and returned to the room.

That same evening, when the twilight was deepening, the five elder children were taken down to our father's study. He was sitting there alone, at the side of the fire. As the little troop came into the room, he opened his arms wide, and we ran into them, and he clasped us all to his heart. I was the tallest, and his head dropped on my shoulder, and he said with a choking voice "You have no Mamma now." He held us a long time so ; his whole breast heaving with convulsive sobs. Then he gathered the two little ones, William and

John, on his knees, and kept his arms tight round us all,—his head resting on the cluster of young heads closely pressed together ; and there we remained in silence and darkness, except for the glow of the dying embers, till at last the nurse came and asked leave to put us to bed.

The funeral took place the following Thursday morning. I remember watching from the old nursery window the waving plumes of the hearse, and the long procession till it passed out of sight.

## CHAPTER IX

### OUR AUNT'S STORY

AUNT AGNES, our mother's only sister, who had been with us from the time Robert was born, now remained in charge of the young family ; and I may here give a little sketch of her life.

She was considerably younger than her sister, and was brought up by her after the early death of their mother, as I have already related.

She must have been a bright, warm-hearted, hot-tempered, strong-willed child, devotedly attached to her sister-mother.

When she went to school she used to get a halfpenny every morning to buy a roll for her lunch. This halfpenny she saved resolutely,—sometimes holding it tightly in her hand while she looked hungrily in at the baker's window. Then she turned to another window, and gazed

with longing at the necklaces exposed to view, one of which she had set her heart on obtaining as a present for her sister. She secretly persevered with her savings, keeping every farthing she received, besides her lunch halfpence, till she had gathered 16s.—the price of the much-coveted necklace. I have seen and worn this necklace when I was a little girl, and my mother told me its story. What afterwards became of it, I know not. Another anecdote of my aunt's childhood is less pleasing. She had been denied something she was eager for, and was so wrathful in consequence that, instead of going to school one morning, she set off to the Clyde to drown herself, and thus punish her sister. She took off her shoes and stockings to leave them on the bank, but when her feet touched the water she changed her mind, put them on again, and in a subdued temper went to school. On another occasion she turned out of her way to wet her feet in every pool on the road, that she might give herself a bad cold, and grieve the friends who had offended her. These little stories she told me herself.

All her life she was generous, warm-hearted,



energetic, and passionate. In her young-lady days she was much sought after, for besides being very pretty, she was remarkable for her conversational powers, lively wit, and clever repartee. At one time when she was staying with us, she carried on a newspaper controversy with Dr. Cook, a Presbyterian minister, who made a great noise in his day all over the North of Ireland ; and, indeed, his name was known both in England and Scotland as that of a remarkable preacher and a fiery orator. What the subject of the controversy was I do not know, but it was considered by the public at large that Dr. Cook's opponent had decidedly the best of the argument, and he became enraged and demanded imperatively that the name of his traducer should be published. The editor, however, kept the secret, and Dr. Cook never had the mortification of knowing that it was a young lady who had excited him to frenzy.

She had a wonderful gift of story telling. The number and variety of her tales, and the vivacity or pathos, as the case might be, with which she narrated them, were marvellous. She never failed to melt us to tears with the

pitiful cry of Bluebeard's injured wife to her sister on the battlements: "Sister Ann, Sister Ann, do you see anybody coming?" or the heavy sigh of the poor Beast when Beauty sadly but invariably replied, "No, Beast" to his repeated offers of marriage. Besides tales of the most varied character, her memory was stored with beautiful old ballads and metrical romances, which it was delicious to hear her recite.

Her marriage took place in 1826, when I was eight years old. She had had many good offers, but she was most unfortunate in the one she accepted. All her friends disapproved of her choice, as they knew the weakness of the man's character. Arthur Gall was a very handsome young fellow, greatly her inferior in social position, whom her brothers had employed as a clerk, and were sending out to their house in Brazil. They were very angry at his presumption in asking her, but the marriage took place in spite of their remonstrances and the dissuasions of other friends. It was not long till its sadness was apparent to everybody. After a short trip, the newly-wedded pair came over to Belfast to pay a

farewell visit to our father and mother before sailing for Brazil, but the bride arrived alone ! Her husband had gone ashore when the steamer stopped at Greenock, and he did not come back in time to continue the voyage with her, but followed some days later. He had been drinking in the interval. And this was the man to whom she had linked her life, and with whom she was about to leave her native land.

Young as I was I remember the shade on every brow, though I did not understand the terribleness of its cause. A dinner party had been invited to do honour to the young couple, but the bride had to meet the guests without the bridegroom.

They sailed for Brazil ; but everything went wrong, and they returned in about two years and moved about from place to place, sometimes together, and sometimes she stayed with us or with Uncle John. At last Mr. Gall went to Lisbon in some business capacity, and she remained behind, and was with our mother during her last illness ; and after our mother's death she remained in charge of the house with little interruption till the autumn of

1834, when she left us to join her husband in Lisbon. (This is glancing far ahead, but I will finish her sad story here.) After living with him abroad for a year or two, she returned to us in the most miserable circumstances. He had treated her so cruelly that at last she fled to her cousin, Mrs. James Graham, and stayed with her till she could take her passage to Liverpool and thence to Glasgow, where we were by this time settled.

In the dead of a winter night, Anna and I were awakened by a knocking at the hall door. It frightened us ; but as it continued, we went down hand in hand, trembling, to find out what it was. We called through the keyhole, and a wretched woman, standing on the doorstep, entreated us in pitiful accents to take her in ; we did not recognise the voice, and hesitated timidly about opening the door. At last we unlocked it, but still kept the chain fastened, and then she made us understand that it was our aunt who stood shivering without. In great wonder we quickly undid the chain and brought her up to our room, undressed her, and got her into our bed, and warmed

her between us. She was inexpressibly forlorn and unhappy. She had arrived at the Broomielaw from Liverpool as a steerage passenger, and was not allowed to stay on board till morning. Having no money to pay for a "noddy," as Glasgow cabs were then called, she had to walk in the dreary night all alone through the long distance from the steamboat to the College. We knew nothing of what had happened, and were utterly astonished at her sudden appearance. She never spoke of the barbarous treatment to which she had been subjected, but subsequently we heard of it from Mrs. Graham. She never saw her husband again. She stayed with us, and some considerable time after a letter came to my father to say Mr. Gall had been found dead somewhere in the Southern States of North America. He had died by violence, inflicted, it was thought, by his own hand. We were at Gourock for the summer, and our aunt had gone to Largs on a visit to her cousin and dear friend, Aunt Elizabeth Graham, when the terrible letter came. Our father burned the letter, and deputed me to tell her he had heard that Mr. Gall was dead. We did not

go to meet her at the quay on her return according to our usual custom, for we could not give her a joyful welcome, or entertain her with ordinary talk. Instead, I painfully watched the steamer pass the drawing-room windows, just as the sun was setting, and saw her on board wave towards the house, and was grieved to think how solitary she would feel with no one to greet her arrival. I met her at the hall door, and led her to her room, which she did not leave for many days. She went to Brussels soon after to perfect herself in French, that she might be able to teach ; as, now that Anna and I were quite grown up, and capable of managing the house, she preferred to be independent if possible. When she had completed her French studies she returned to Glasgow and gave lessons in winter, living in lodgings, and going with us to the country in summer. When both Anna and I were married she again became mistress of the College House, and continued so during my father's life, and afterwards till William was married, when he took for her a small house at Largs facing the sea, and there she lived until her death.

[To this little home came happy little visitors,—grand-nephews and grand-nieces. They sat on her lap, and listened enthralled, as their parents had done before them, to the stories of Beauty and the Beast, of Bluebeard, of Red Riding-hood. Never was lap so cosy, and never were tales so thrilling.]



## CHAPTER X

### AFTER OUR MOTHER'S DEATH

I WILL now go back again to the summer after we lost our mother.

Dr. Marshall, our kind family doctor, had a house at Larne, to which his family went every summer, and he induced our father to take a furnished house near his own, to which we went about the middle of June.

His four daughters were there with their governess, and their father and mother came and went. They exerted themselves to make our stay pleasant, and planned many beautiful excursions, taking dinner with them to be spread upon the grass. In this way we saw many interesting places along the coast, as well as various gentlemen's grounds in the neighbourhood.

One day Mrs. Marshall asked me to bring her a glass of water from a mossy well in a

little glade where we had just dined. In stepping down to get it, I trod on a wasps' nest concealed among the moss. The enraged insects flew out in great numbers, and stung my neck and face and hands. I opened my mouth to scream, and they flew in and stung my lips and throat. It was a dreadful experience, and a feverish illness followed.

One of our excursions was to Island Magee, which is really a peninsula—not an island. Our father told us a curious little story connected with it, concerning an incident that happened in the early days of his residence in Belfast. On a Sunday morning, as was his habit, he had risen early to refresh himself with a long walk, and he directed his steps along the Carrickfergus shore. To his surprise vehicles of every description—private cars and carriages, gigs, public conveyances, carts, all crowded—wheeled past him as quickly as they could go. At last a hearse rattled by, bearing this morning as its freight a numerous and lively company of passengers clustered inside and out. It almost seemed as if Belfast were being emptied of inhabitants. For a long time he could get no

explanation, for no one would stop to speak, but he made out at last that they were all hurrying to see a curious creature, described in a letter published in one of the newspapers of the previous day. The letter purported to come from a farmer of Island Magee, and was somewhat illiterate. It told how he had observed, for several successive mornings, a wonderful animal sitting on the rocks, apparently combing its hair. He thought it looked like a young woman, but he could not examine it closely, as it always sprang into the sea when he approached, waving a shining tail, which flashed under the water as it swam rapidly away. The artless description imposed on the public. They believed that a veritable mermaid had appeared, and they flocked to behold the wonder. They saw the farmer, if not the mermaid, and the crestfallen crowds returned in the evening fatigued and wayworn,—some enraged, and others amused at the successful hoax ; while a number who might have known better were ashamed of themselves for having been so gulled.

One of these was Dr. McDonnell, a leading physician of Belfast, who had long held a high

place in public estimation. He was a tall, fine-looking man, with a very professional appearance in his knee breeches and otherwise quaint, old-fashioned dress ; I remember him well. He would gladly have hushed the matter up and ignored his trip ; but, so far from this being possible, the incident became the subject of a clever burlesque, in which he, under another name, was made to play an important part. It was very popular, and this theatrical entertainment, founded on the credulity of the people, was some compensation for their fruitless journey to see the mermaid. I believe the author of the hoax was never discovered.

Under our father's supervision, lessons were carried on at Larne diligently but moderately. Anna and I read the Latin Testament regularly with him. James and William, of course, had not begun Latin, but they had some share in the English reading, and were exceedingly advanced in arithmetic and geography for their age, and they were always gaining knowledge in a simple, easy way in our walks and talks with our father. We had the "Library of

Entertaining Knowledge" for our amusement. We used to make houses for ourselves of chairs hung with shawls, in which we sat on the floor and read aloud to each other about "Insect Architecture"; or sometimes we built our house in a hay field with walls of hay, and sat there in a circle for our reading.

Poor James was never very strong. I remember his frightening us by falling down one Sunday in a faint on the floor of a large square pew; but he was not hurt, and soon recovered on being carried out.

That we might be nearer town when our father's classes were resumed, we moved in autumn to Craig-a-vad, where we had spent the summer of 1826 so happily. There, to emulate the feats of Miss Edgeworth's Harry and Lucy, we set about building a bridge across a tiny rivulet that trickled through a neighbouring field. We could step across the stream, it is true, but pretended we could not. We dug it a little wider for a short distance, and gave our bridge very secure butments, covered it with clay, made it level, and paved it with pebbles; and when it was finished we brought our father to see it, and were delighted when

he walked along it, and it was found to bear his weight without the slightest yielding.

It was the next winter (1830-31) that James and William were first sent to some classes in the Institution for an hour or two in the day ; and the delightful after-dinner lessons and readings with our dear father were continued with ever-increasing profit and pleasure. As we dined at half-past four, and the meal was quickly despatched, we had long evenings with him. He gathered us about him, and in every way strove to supply the place of our lovely mother. He was indeed both father and mother to us, and watched over us continually. William was a great pet with him—partly, perhaps, on account of his extreme beauty, partly on account of his wonderful quickness of apprehension, but most of all, I think, on account of his coaxing, fascinating ways, and the caresses he lavished on his “darling papa.” When our father came in he would run to him, and jump about him like a little dog, exclaiming, “Oo’s nice good pretty papa, oo’s nice good pretty papa,” and when his father stooped to greet him, the child would fling his arms about his neck and



smother him with kisses, and stroke his cheeks endearingly. He had not words adequate to express his affection, and tried every conceivable way to make it felt. And this was not occasional demonstration; it was his constant habit, and had been from infancy. Sometimes the others thought that there was a little affectation in this, especially when he used baby language after he could speak quite well; and we laughed at him, but he never heeded. I suppose he thought the old way showed most fondness.

He was, however, easily irritated if he were crossed, and then he became snappish a little, and we would say, "Willie's in the *crabbs*, don't mind him." And it was the best way; if he was let alone the *crabbs* vanished and sunshine quickly returned.

I do not remember that any of us were ever in the slightest degree jealous of William on account of our father's making him a little more a pet than the rest of us. We were proud of him, and indeed we thought the child petted the father even more than the father petted the child, but we saw plainly that the fondling of his little son pleased him.



Willie always slept in a small bed in our father's room—that is, after his early nursery days—because he had for some years a tendency to sleep-walking, which for a time caused some anxiety.

Anna and I resumed attendance at Dr. Bryce's Latin class and M. D'Oisey's French class; and the drawing master of the Institution, Mr. Mulloy, and a music master, Mr. Dalton, came twice a week to teach us at home. We also read a great deal with our aunt—chiefly standard historical books, such as Robertson's *Charles V.* Sometimes they proved rather ahead of our age and capacity; for instance, we fairly stuck in Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, though we got through his *Leo X.* with a considerable degree of interest; and we greatly enjoyed Voltaire's *Peter the Great* and *Charles XII.*, both of which we read with her in French about this time.

When spring came, our father generally took a walk with us in the early morning before breakfast, and he used to invent interesting topics of conversation, which were carried on through successive mornings. Two of us held his hands and two walked quite

near, but the places of honour were shared alternately by the four. I remember all being intensely interested in a series of talks on the progress of civilisation, in which every one, even little Willie, suggested ideas, and took part in the conversation. We also in these walks made imaginary voyages of discovery, full of adventure, calling at various ports, and sailing up rivers to obtain the products of the countries we visited, and become acquainted with the inhabitants. We explored the icy regions of the north, the burning deserts of Africa and Arabia, and the fragrant forests of Ceylon. There was no end to our travels and the wonders we saw when we walked with our father. Sometimes we transported ourselves to ancient days, and sailed with the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece, or accompanied the Greeks to Troy to recover the beautiful Helen, or joined Ulysses in his protracted wanderings. Our father always led the talk, but we all assisted.

Miss Edgeworth's books were favourites of our childhood, and her *Harry and Lucy* had an influence in developing the scientific tastes of James and William.

The summer of 1831 was spent in a cottage called Silverstream, near Carrickfergus. As the school holidays did not begin till two or three weeks after the family left town, James and William and I remained at home with our father,—I to go on with Latin and French, and James and William to continue their classes in the Institution; and we went down with him from Saturday till Monday. I think Anna must have given up Latin by this time; at any rate she did not remain in town with us. We three worked away together, and we had readings and morning and evening walks with our father.

About midsummer the prizes were distributed in the Common Hall of the Institution. Very proud was I of my young brothers, who had won the first and second prizes (William the first and James the second), and I was very anxious they should look nice when they went up to receive them; so, as William was not very particular in those days—he was seven years of age at the time—and the maid who usually looked after him was at Silverstream, I insisted on washing him myself on this great occasion, thus rousing him to

considerable, indeed I may say to great, indignation, which I sought to qualify by liberal promises of bread and jam. In performing these ablutions I belaboured the poor little boy so energetically, and was scattering so much soap and water about, that the servant in charge gave us a basin in the little back garden, and left us to splash to my heart's content. When I thought his face and neck were quite clean, and no speck could be detected on his nails, and his hair was smooth and shining, I brought him in to dress him. The brothers were dressed alike, but James, being older, was capable, I thought, of managing for himself, with just a few finishing touches from me to make him perfect. They wore white trousers with little black *surtouts* richly braided, and wide, white linen collars, and black ribbon neck-ties which I knotted for them both, taking care to make very pretty bows. Next, I dressed myself in a white frock and black sash as quickly as I could, lest they should spoil their attire while waiting for me. At last away we went together, as gay as larks, to the giving of the prizes. Often, in the years which followed,

did I proudly witness my brothers receive their prizes, but subsequent occasions have become blurred and mixed most of them, while this first one stands out distinct and vivid.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MOVE TO GLASGOW

THE following winter our father was appointed Professor of Mathematics in Glasgow University, instead of Mr. Miller, who resigned the chair. In his student days my father had attended his classes, and had many a strange story to tell of the disorder that prevailed under the rule of "Jemmy Miller"—for so he was irreverently called by his students. Once a student outside, in collusion with some within, locked both the doors of the class-room. The lecture was just begun when the Professor wanted something he had forgotten in the adjoining apparatus-room, and went to fetch it; but he found the door fastened. A student kindly offered to run round the other way, but this door was also secured. With a face of dismay, Mr. Miller exclaimed: "Oh! gentlemen! what shall we

do ? we are locked in." A wag suggested the windows, and instantly an officious troop rushed to the one nearest the rostrum, unbolted and opened it ; out leaped the Professor in his academic gown, and the whole class followed his example, their scarlet gowns flying behind them. Of course, it was impossible to resume the interrupted lecture.

One morning he was to give some practical instruction in surveying, and for this purpose the class was invited to accompany him to the High Green, which was separated from the lower part of the College by the Molen-dinar, and reached by a foot-bridge across the stream. The old Observatory was situated on the highest part of this green, and was a quaint and picturesque building of moderate size. When the Professor and his students were returning after the lesson, it was found impossible to open the gate on the bridge—we may guess why. The youths quickly took off their shoes and stockings to wade through the little river ; but it was suggested that it would be quite undignified for a Professor to do such a thing, and one of them courageously offered to carry him across on his back. The



bewildered Professor eagerly accepted the proposal, but when they reached the deepest part of the channel the wicked lad declared himself utterly exhausted, and mercilessly let his teacher slip down from his back into the water.

In this class obstruction seemed to be the aim of the students, and many and frivolous were the inventions by which the laudable object was attained. Once one of them brought a little box with him containing a large blue-bottle fly, to which he had ingeniously attached a balloon made of the silky lining of egg-shell. After the Professor's preliminary remarks, when he paused to drink a little water, the insect was let loose, and caught his attention. "Eh ! what's that ?" he cried, and jumped down from the platform to see. Then began a general chase, which ended business for that day. With a similar result a bird was let loose on another occasion. Once, with unaccustomed severity, Mr. Miller fined a very wild youth half-a-crown for an aggravated offence. The mischievous fellow took the trouble of collecting farthings to that amount, which he did up in parcels with

a pin between each farthing ; and, rolling them in quantities of paper pasted together, he handed them to "Jemmy" in the class while the paste was still wet, requesting him to count and see that it was right. The poor Professor submissively obeyed, and set about uncoiling the sticky slips of paper, trying at the same time to defend his fingers against the pins ; while the class looked on cheering vociferously.

We did not move to Glasgow till October, 1832. Cholera, which had been steadily travelling westward from India, reached our islands in the early summer. It was the first visit of the scourge, and very solemn and awful it was. We remained in town to be near the doctors ; and I remember the dreadful dead-cart passing at all hours, with bodies to be interred in heaps at Friar's Bush, the Catholic burying ground, near Belfast. In Glasgow the epidemic was still worse, and this was the reason the removal to our new home was delayed ; but the Glasgow classes opened on November 1st, and it was necessary to be settled before that date.

Friends in Belfast presented our father with a valuable silver service before he left, and we children received many parting gifts.

The voyage was still a much more tedious affair than it is now, though very different from what it was in the days when our mother crossed in her girlhood. We sailed in the evening, and, although the weather was fine, we did not arrive in Glasgow till the late afternoon next day. I recollect leaning over the bulwarks and watching, till I was giddy and half blind, the foam of the paddles passing under my eyes as we slowly steamed up the river. Mr. Scott, formerly of Dunovan, invited some of us to stay in his house in Blythswood Square till our own in the College should be ready for us, while the rest of the family were received by Uncle John. In a week or two we were established in one of the houses in the Professors' Court, with windows looking out on the old High Street. Cholera, though abating, was still bad, and we saw funerals and the dead-carts often pass along the street on their way to the Cathedral and the Necropolis. But the plague gradually diminished till it entirely disappeared when



### THE OLD COLLEGE FROM HIGH STREET

Shewing the tower whence "the lively little tinkling bell," fondly remembered by Lord Kelvin in his address as Chancellor, called the professors and students to work in their class-rooms in the early morning



winter set in. It carried off no friends of ours except Mr. Mulloy, the Belfast drawing master.

A great disappointment awaited our father on beginning work in Glasgow. The size of the class, and the consequent emoluments of the Chair, had been much exaggerated, and an agreement entered into bound the new Professor to give up actually more than he received. Thus, for the first year, his income for the Professorship was less than nothing ; and he worked hard for this. To mitigate the loss, he announced an afternoon course of lectures for ladies, on geography and astronomy, to be given twice a week in his class-room. Such a thing had never been heard of before in the University, and it was extremely popular. The large class-room was crowded in every corner, and it was a novel and interesting spectacle to see bench rising above bench filled with fashionably-dressed ladies, everyone looking intent, and many taking notes. All the belles of Glasgow were among the students. This class was carried on for two or three years with undiminished popularity, till the pressure of other engagements

compelled my father to give it up, the regular mathematical class becoming so large as to give him quite as much work as he could overtake. When he first began his lectures, the students attempted to play the tricks and behave in the lawless way that had become customary under the former Professor, but they quickly discovered that they had one to deal with now who would tolerate no disorder, and who knew how to check it at once. Before many weeks had elapsed the class was characterised by perfect decorum ; and most of its members, roused to a worthy ambition, exerted themselves to win the approval of their teacher, and profit by the instruction they had come to obtain.

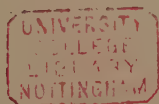
Many of our mother's relations lived in Glasgow, and thus, besides the pleasant society of the College Court, we found ourselves surrounded by a large circle of kind friends, among them a goodly number of young second cousins. Our father and our aunt went more into company than had hitherto been usual with them. Anna and I were at several children's parties, and James and William went to some of them with us. We



did not go to school, but our father, as hitherto, took the general supervision of our lessons. William and James began Latin with him on the Hamiltonian system, and made rapid progress; they also attended the Junior Mathematical class as listeners, without being examined or writing the exercises.

In a letter to William dated May 7th, 1886, Mr. Wallace, an old student of our father's, writes, "It was in a very large class (1831-2) [Mr. Wallace should have said 1832-3] that, as a mere child, you startled the whole class, not one of whom could answer a certain question, by calling out, 'Do, papa, let me answer.' The impression on my mind has never been effaced."

At the close of the first session a memorable event took place. We had our first drive in a railway carriage! We went as a family-party—father, aunt, and the six children—from St. Rollox to Airdrie. We were greatly excited about the expedition; and it certainly was interesting, though it could not be called agreeable. The travelling appointments were of the roughest; the carriage, if worthy of



the name, was extremely dirty and made of bare unpainted wood ; and Airdrie, where we had to stand about for hours, was a miserable little black mining town, without any sort of inn in which we could rest or get a morsel to eat. Add to this that Anna and I had just got beautiful new Leghorn hats for the summer, and, in spite of advice to the contrary, Anna insisted on wearing hers in honour of the occasion, very much to its detriment ; for at the station when we were starting, a heavy shower of condensed steam, mixed with soot, fell on us and ruined the gay new hat. It reminded us of Miss Edgeworth's story of "Rosamund and the Purple Jar" ; for Anna, like Rosamund, had been cautioned, and was obliged to wear the damaged head-gear for best all the summer. However, we had actually driven in a steam carriage ; and that was compensation enough for hunger, weariness, and wasted finery.

Our first summer in Scotland was spent at Rothesay, and there our father devoted himself indefatigably to our education. Every morning the four elder children spent some hours with him in his study, and always after





NETHERHALL.

Lord Kelvin's country seat at Largs

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lessons he took us out for a walk, and made the walk a daily pleasure with his varied converse.

Mr. Ker, an old friend of our parents, had a house quite near us that summer. He too had lost his wife, and our father invited his two children, William and Eliza, to join in our morning lessons; and then a friendship was cemented which lasted through life.

After our two o'clock dinner Anna and I usually did some needlework with our aunt, and read with her till tea-time; after which we all, except little Robert, went out together; and as the days shortened the moon and stars were shining before we came in.

This summer I had two terrible attacks of bleeding at the nose, which weakened me very much for a time; and by way of a little change my aunt took me across to Largs (where, long after, William built his country seat) on a visit to my great-aunt, Mrs. Graham, a very kind and clever old lady. Here I was thrown into intimate intercourse with many of her grand-children, and I enjoyed this first visit to a place which has since seemed the green spot of the earth to

me. It had been made familiar to me in my childish days by my mother's stories. She told of the long journey from Glasgow accomplished over bad roads in a big cart, with the servants and luggage, when going down for the summer in her young days. How delightful to children such travelling must have been, when they could get out and run up and down the hills when they liked, and pick flowers by the way ! A night was passed in a little inn on the roadside, and this was part of the pleasure. In my own youth Largs was easy of access ; for then steamboats plied regularly backward and forward along the coast, carrying crowds of passengers.

## CHAPTER XII

### HOUSEKEEPING CARES

WHEN we returned to town in October our aunt had to leave us, as her husband had come to Liverpool and desired her to join him there. During her absence, which lasted about seven months, Anna and I had charge of the house. We had a good-natured, old-fashioned cook who had long served our uncle John, and who had come to us very soon after our move to Glasgow when he went to Apalachicola, whence he never returned. This servant, Barbara by name, was very fond of us, and humoured us very kindly ; but, I think, too much. We wished to be super-excellent housewives, and for a while insisted on her going out with one of us in the mornings to make the household purchases, carrying a basket on her arm. Very consequential little ladies we were, stepping along



from the butcher's to the baker's, etc., our elderly cook walking respectfully behind. I sometimes wonder at our father's patience when I think of the odd sort of dishes we provided for him. At last he said he would like something simple, such as a round of beef. Accordingly one was got which appeared and reappeared, and was followed by another ; and I don't know how long this bill of fare might have continued had not our long-suffering parent turned restive, and declared he must have some variety. But I do think Barbara should have taken more charge of the commissariat. In her good nature she allowed us to come down to the kitchen now and then to make cakes and other confections wherewith to enrich the table, and we were very proud of these performances. It sometimes happened that our father called for us in the midst of our culinary operations. Instantly we ran, and all the materials, in whatever stage of the process they might be, were put aside till we should find time to finish the business ourselves. It can scarcely be supposed that the cake or other dainty did not lose something of its delicacy from this

want of continuity in its manufacture ; but it lost none of its relish, and our handiwork passed for perfection with an appreciative little company.

At this time we were certainly very exemplary in our conduct, and led the quaintest of lives. We read Latin (*Cæsar's Commentaries*) with our father during his breakfast, our own porridge and milk having been despatched earlier. When he went to his class at ten Anna and I went up to the drawing-room, and she gave Robert his little lesson and practised on the piano, while I taught John to the best of my ability. He did writing, arithmetic, and geography with me ; also a little French and Latin, and read Goldsmith's *History of England*. Nor was poetry neglected in this course of study. Two or three times a week we read little pieces which, according to Miss Edgeworth's teaching, I strove to make him clearly understand and then commit to memory. He and I continued to work together as pupil and teacher till he was able to enter the High School with the third year scholars, and he distinguished himself among them. I

generally contrived to draw a little every day, and began this winter to take pencil likenesses, some of which still exist, and really are not bad. I got books from the College Library to read about painting, and about the lives and works of the old masters, and I thought it would be the perfection of happiness to paint like Raphael or Titian.

After dinner our father gave us a short mathematical lesson, and after that he read aloud to us. During this winter he thus read the whole of Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, several of the plays of Shakespeare, those also of Goldsmith and Sheridan, besides selections from the old poets. William had the strongest sense of humour of any of us, and not only enjoyed it himself, but set all the little party laughing mirthfully whenever a humourous passage occurred. Mrs. Malaprop and Bob Acres, etc., were most inspiring. Whilst our father read, Anna and I sewed—not fancy-work, but flannel petticoats and the like; and our brothers lay on their backs on the floor with their arms extended, to give them a rest and help them to grow up straight. The reading was followed by a lively tea, after



ANNA AT THE AGE OF FOURTEEN

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth*

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which our father retired to his study, the two youngest children were taken up to bed, and the four elder adjourned to the drawing-room. James and William were attending Dr. Cooper's Natural History Class, and in the evenings they retailed the lectures to their sisters after tea. William was not ten till the following June. I was James's pupil, and Anna was William's. They were able to recapitulate what they had heard with wonderful clearness and accuracy, and we gained a great deal from them; they, too, must have gained from trying to teach us. The Professor most kindly supplied specimens to help the young lecturers, some of which he lent, and some he gave. This was the beginning of James's collection of minerals. About nine o'clock James and William went to bed; and Anna and I went down to the study, taking our father hot water, sugar, and whiskey, to make his "punch";—as long as I can look back he always had a glass of punch at night. He would then take down a book from the shelves and read a little bit, pointing out the beauties or defects of the style. It was often the *Spectator* or the

*Rambler* that he chose for this purpose ; sometimes *Blair's Sermons*, which he considered pure English as well as profitable reading. We sat on two stools at his feet. In about half an hour we said "Good-night." A servant always came for our candle and took it to him that he might know we were snug in bed.

In the afternoons we children usually went out all together for a walk, Robert being an object of special care to the others. Sometimes we did a little shopping ; and I am sure the troop of young customers entering, intent on business, must often have amused the shopmen. One of our first purchases was to provide the household with winter socks and stockings, which Anna and I ran in the heel before they were taken into use, as we had seen our aunt and the nurses do in former days. It was a large piece of work for two little girls, but we accomplished it thoroughly. A Miss Muir called one day and found us busy with the basket of hosiery between us, and she praised us and admired what we had done so much, that we were ashamed and vexed ; we thought she was flattering us, and we did not like her afterwards.



When our aunt was leaving she had provided Robert with a suit of blue merino which we were to keep for best, and use his old things for every day. We thought he looked so much prettier in the fresh blue, we should have liked it put on every morning; but our consciences would not allow us to disobey our aunt's orders. Accordingly, Anna and I, James and William, clubbed our money, and the whole six of us set off to McIntyre's, at the foot of High Street, to choose material for another suit; and there, after careful deliberation, we bought enough of nice soft royal Stuart tartan for our purpose. A dressmaker who worked for us, Mrs. Buchanan by name, kindly cut and tacked it together for us without charge, and Anna and I sewed it; and we hemmed a pretty cambric frill for the neck and arms, which our good cook washed and crimped for us. Now the dress was ready, but we all thought tartan stockings would greatly improve the effect, so we set out in a body with eightpence-halfpenny—all that remained of our united funds—to purchase a pair. We went first to Smith's, at the foot of High Street, close to the

Tron Church, and asked for "Royal Stuart stockings costing eightpence-halfpenny, to fit this little boy," pointing to Robert and holding up his foot. There were such things in the shop, but the price was far beyond our means; so we came out disappointed, and wended our way along Trongate and Argyll Street, calling at every likely shop we saw, but with no better success. Then we turned into Buchanan Street, and at last, getting weary of the search for "Royal Stuart stockings for this little boy costing eightpence-halfpenny," we reluctantly agreed to take a pair of scarlet wool marbled with white, which a good-natured shopman offered for the sum named, and which he endeavoured to persuade us were as good and fashionable as those we sought. We tried to be quite pleased with them, but did not altogether succeed. That same evening we all helped to equip our little brother, and then proudly led him to the study door, threw it open, and made him enter, while the five stood aside to watch what effect the apparition would produce on our father; for the affair had been kept a profound secret from him, at any rate we believed

he knew nothing of it. There was no disappointment, and the admiration he expressed made us all unboundedly happy. From that evening Robert was dressed to our entire satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

One day about this time a difficult problem was given out to the students in the mathematical class. William, of course, tried to solve it, though not yet a student; but he had not succeeded before going to bed. By-and-bye, when he was supposed to be fast asleep, his voice was heard downstairs, shouting, "Eureka! Eureka!" and on our father going up to see what it was about, he found the little bare-footed figure standing in its nightgown on the landing, excited and triumphant. The solution had flashed on the child's mind in bed, and was already, by the help of the stair gas, scribbled on a slate he had placed at his bedside.

I do not remember our father going out to dinners, or into society of any kind, during the whole of this winter when our aunt first

<sup>1</sup>[When my sister and I visited our Uncle Robert in Melbourne in 1903 we read these recollections to him. The frail old man remembered this incident perfectly and listened with delight.—E. T. K.]

left us. The happy little domestic circle always enjoyed the sunshine of his presence.

Very few of the Professors had children in our young days ; but Sir Daniel Sandford, Professor of Greek, had a large family. Francis, the eldest son, was almost exactly William's age, and they were great companions. One evening a number of the young Sandfords came to tea at our house. They were excessively lively children. To imitate his father, who was famous for his eloquence, Francis declared he would make a speech to us ; and to our horror he nimbly got up on the chimney-piece, and began to declaim with very animated gesticulations. It was with considerable difficulty that our father got him to descend from his lofty position, and only when his oration was nearly at an end.

When staying with William in the winter of 1892 I was much interested in meeting Francis, and hearing him and William talk over their childish days. They recalled many incidents of their early boyhood ;—how “they twa had paidled in the burn,” and sailed their boats together in the Molendinar. True,

there were not many "gowans fine" on the banks for them to pu'; but they did "paidle in the burn," they said, and made a dock in it for their boats; and they fell in and made a pretty mess! It was the first time I had heard of their falling in.

The two play-fellows had both become peers of the United Kingdom when they were thus recalling their childish sports. It was the year that William got his peerage. Francis Sandford had become Lord Sandford two or three years earlier, and William asked him to be one of his two supporters on the day he should first enter the House of Lords.

In October 1834 James and William became regular students of the University, and matriculated on November 14th as was the custom at that time.

[There was surely no necessity to offer to either of these boys any inducement to diligence in their studies; yet we read in a letter from Anna to her aunt, dated November, 1834, "Aunt Graham has told James and Willie that if they each win two prizes she will give them a guinea each, and if they each

win one prize she will give one between them. She wanted them to drink tea with her to-night, but they had to refuse, their clothes were so shabby. They are to get new ones at the New Year before going to Thornly Bank.”]

That autumn, our aunt was once more summoned to join her husband who had gone back to Lisbon ; and she left us, never again to take up her old position as mistress of the house till after Anna and I were married. When she was gone we resumed our quaint and conscientious housekeeping, determined to obey all the directions she had given us, and to do everything we had heard of good housekeepers doing. We brought down all the spare blankets and had them shaken and toasted, and then put them by nicely folded and covered. We counted and classified all the linen, and laboriously mended some that needed repair. But I think the burden of all these duties, most of them self-imposed, was more than my strength was equal to ; for, in my anxiety to have everything right, I went off sleep ; and when I was lying awake at night I sewed long seams of old sheets, over-



casting the selvedges together, cutting them up the middle, and hemming the sides,—our aunt having prepared some of them before leaving, and shown me how the work should be done. It is not wonderful that my health gradually failed and I fell into a tedious illness which produced great weakness as the spring advanced. But John's lessons were carried on with very little intermission each morning in my own room; and the family came up beside me for the usual evening reading. When it was over our father taught us to play whist, which we greatly enjoyed. Our mother's aunt, whom we called Aunt Graham, and her daughter, Aunt Elizabeth, were very kind in coming often to see me, and in taking me for a drive, when I was able, in their carriage which was drawn by a pair of beautiful white horses. The whole equipage had been presented to Aunt Graham by her sons not long before, and it soon became a familiar object in the old College Court.



## CHAPTER XIII

### SUMMERS BY THE SEA

IN the beginning of May, 1835, we went to a cottage which we had taken for the summer at Invercloy in Arran. By this time my strength was so gone that I had to be carried down to Aunt Graham's carriage, and then lifted on board the steamer, and laid on a bed prepared for me. The vessel was the "Glenalbin," a Glasgow and Londonderry boat, which our father had engaged to put in to Invercloy and drop us there, as no steamboats were plying to Arran at the time. On our arrival, I was carried ashore to the little Brodick Inn, and next day conveyed to our own cottage, lying on a mattress spread on a country cart. It was headaches that I suffered from, and I do not think I should have been so weak and ill but for the treatment to which I had been subjected, being bled at least once





COTTAGES IN ARRAN

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth*

a fortnight with leeches, and often blistered on the back of my neck. It was wonderful how quickly my strength now came back. In a few weeks I was able to walk a mile or two, and my brothers often trundled me in a wheelbarrow along a smooth greensward that bordered the shore; and so enabled me to reach further distances than would otherwise have been possible at first.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[Note by E. T. K.—Comparing these Recollections with old family letters, there are some slight discrepancies here with regard to dates. The summers of 1834 and 1835 were both spent at Invercloy in Arran, and the two seem to have become blended into one in my mother's memory, and their incidents mixed.]

How primitive and out of the way these summer quarters were is graphically described in a letter to her aunt in Lisbon dated June 6, 1834 :

. . . . "We have no conveniences. We cannot even get a little salt or pepper, or a little flour, without sending to Saltcoats" [on the mainland]. "Our bread comes from Saltcoats, and it is excellent. The eggs were fourpence a dozen, but they are now fourpence-halfpenny. The milk is very fine, but not a bit of tolerable butter is to be had. Butcher meat is seldom to be had, but we have never felt the want of it yet. We had a quarter of veal at fourpence per pound, which served us for a week with the assistance of eggs."

Anna also wrote to her aunt :

"INVERCLOY, ARRAN, *June 18, 1834.*

. . . . "You may suppose that this is a very cheap place when I tell you that we got two legs and the tail of a calf for the mighty sum of one shilling. You are not to suppose that it was merely

On Sunday mornings the family went, in an open cart of the country, seated with rough benches and straw, across from Brodick to Lamblash, where was the parish church—the only one in the island. It happened one Sunday that there was a revival service, and the congregation grew much excited, uttering loud exclamations and groans; and at last some of the old women began to give vent to their feelings by tossing their Bibles in the air. This tickled Willie's sense of humour, and he shook with smothered laughter, which started all the other boys laughing too. Our pew was close under the pulpit in full view of the preacher, who, looking down, administered a grave rebuke. The smothered laughter then exploded, and the minister, pointing his finger at the ringleader, exclaimed, "Ye'll no lach when ye're in hell!" This was too much: and Willie rolled clean over on to the floor. For some reason or other our father was not with us that day, and I was in charge of the party. Crimson with shame, I bustled

the shanks, for it dined us so plentifully for three days that even William acknowledged he had got quite enough. We got a most excellent fowl also, which, with the help of some ham, dined us for two days for tenpence."]

them all out of the church as quickly as I could.

The island at that time seemed very remote and inaccessible, yet we found plenty of agreeable society ready to welcome us. Dr. Meikleham, Professor of Natural Philosophy, whom William afterwards succeeded, had a house quite near; and we had much friendly intercourse with him and his family. He was a good-natured, fat, little hunchback, with a very red face; and he had a fat, little, curly-haired black dog called Jura, that always toddled beside him. He had had the creature for many years, and when she died a year or two later, he lamented her as a lost friend. His daughter was a short, stout, benevolent lady, who was extremely kind to us. She often lent me her riding horse, on which, led by Jamie Brown, I accompanied our father and the others in their longer walks. Besides the Professor and his daughter, there were three boys in the family, a little older than any of my brothers, and they used to go out boating together. We had our cottage from Captain Fullarton, who was joint-proprietor of the island with the Duke of Hamilton, and

had the title deeds of his property from Robert Bruce, signed by his own royal hand. Both Captain and Mrs. Fullarton bestowed much kindness upon us, and often invited us to their nice old house up Glen Cloy to meet their friends. The Duke of Hamilton sometimes called and had long talks with our father. He was anxious to persuade Captain Fullarton to sell his estate to him, that he might become sole lord of the island; but the Captain would not consent to part with the lands so long held by his forefathers. I think it would have been mean-spirited had he sold such a birthright. My father dined at the Castle once at any rate, and afterwards he used now and then to go out to Hamilton and dine at the palace. Once when the Duke came to see us in Arran he had on tartan trousers, and to our great surprise we saw holes in the knees. He was very peculiar; for instance, he had his coffin made, and lay down in it every day when at home, to accustom himself to the idea of death; and he had his mausoleum built in view of the windows of Hamilton Palace.

In Arran we made acquaintance with Miss Gibson, a Glasgow lady staying there for the



summer like ourselves. She was kind and pleasant, and we saw her often. Not long before, she had made "the grand tour of Europe," and she was fond of relating her travelling experiences, which she dwelt upon with a sort of innocent vanity; for it was rather a rare distinction in those days to have seen so much of the world.

When visiting William in 1887, I heard she was still living, and had attained the age of 102; so I determined to call on her, as I was told she would be pleased to see me. She had a nice house in Blythswood Square; William's wife accompanied me, and she stayed in the dining-room while I was taken to see the old lady, who was keeping her bed that day. She remembered me quite well. To the attendant, who went in to tell her I was there, she said, "I mind her; she was a very clever lassie," and desired her to bring me in. When I entered the room she raised herself to a sitting posture and held out her hand. "I am glad to see you," she said, "I mind you weel, and I mind your father. He was Dr. Thomson—Dr. James; and I mind you all." She recalled incidents of the summer

in Arran, and added "I mind Willie ; he was a clever laddie. He's Sir William Thomson noo." I told her that his wife was waiting for me in the dining-room. "Eh !" she said, "I would like to see William's wife." So I went for her, and the old lady held out her hand and said, "I'm glad to see you Lady Thomson," and then after a moment's pause, "I'm wearing away. You see I'm in my threes now. Pray for me ; pray for me both of you." Then she said several times, "God bless you both."

A few weeks after, I heard of her death.

Altogether the summer at Invercloy has left a very happy, bright impression, though I do not remember many outstanding occurrences. One afternoon John was playing by himself at the mouth of the Cloy, and seeing a washerwoman's tub on the sand and half in the water, he got into it and began to paddle with a piece of stick, heedless of the rising tide and the current that soon carried him out into the bay. Our father always had a large telescope standing on a table in the window, and this day, as was his usual cus-

tom, when lessons were over he went to look at the vessels passing up and down the Frith in the distance. As he turned the instrument a small object crossed the field of view, which, on examination, he found was his own little son, nearly a mile distant in his frail bark. In extreme alarm, he rushed to the shore and despatched a fisherman, along with one of the Meikleham boys, to the rescue ; and they soon returned, bringing back the young voyager and his tub in safety. The little man had been quite unaware of his danger.

James distinguished himself this summer by making a handsome boat out of a piece of wood which he found on the shore. On the 23rd of July it was quite finished and ready for its first trip, elegantly painted, with its name, "St. Patrick," conspicuous on the stern, and the sails neatly hemmed and properly adjusted. It was a day of rejoicing, for the "St. Patrick" proved a complete success. The greater part of the work had been done while reading aloud was going on, James's knife thus occupying his hands, as the needle did those of his sisters.

[A very important member of the household for a time in Arran was a certain mischievous, thieving kitten, cordially hated by Jane, the maid, but very dearly beloved by the boys. In a letter to Aunt Agnes it is recorded that "the boys could do nothing while she was in the room, and they were always striving who would have her in bed with them. . . . Jane the other morning was so enraged that she drowned her in the Cloy. Willie's sobs and tears exceed description ; however, he contrived in the midst of it to discuss a huge piece of bread and cheese." The letter is dated June 25, 1835, and it concludes, "This is Willie's eleventh birthday. It was kept by a walk up Glen Rosa."]<sup>1</sup>

We remained in our summer quarters till about the middle of October. The Londonderry steamer had taken us down in the beginning of May, and my father wrote

<sup>1</sup>[June 25 and June 26 both lay claim to be Lord Kelvin's birthday. In one birthday book at least, and perhaps in others, his name is inscribed as William Thomson on the 25th, and as Kelvin on the 26th. "It is convenient," he remarked when writing the second signature, "to have two birthdays when you have two names !" I think it must have been shortly before he got his peerage that he found a memorandum in his father's handwriting signed "J. T.", which stated that "William Thomson was born in Belfast on Saturday, the twenty-sixth of June, 1824, at five o'clock in the morning." This seems conclusive evidence, but up till then, from childhood onward, as this old letter and a short-lived boyish diary of his own shew, his birthday had been kept on the 25th.—E. T. K.]



ARRAN FROM NEAR LARCS

*From a Water-Colour Drawing by E. T. King*

To face p. 126



requesting that it should put in to take us home. We had all packed and ready ; but very tempestuous weather intervened, and we were storm-stayed for about ten days in a most uncomfortable condition, hoping to get off each day, and afraid to unpack lest the boat should suddenly appear. While the rain streamed down the window panes and the wind howled without, we were reduced to seek entertainment in the pages of an old newspaper by reading them in a new fashion—not down the columns but straight across the page from left to right—and laughing, as merry young people can laugh, at the utter nonsense thus produced.

At last on a Saturday afternoon the wind lulled and the sun shone ; and the captain of one of Her Majesty's revenue cutters, lying in the bay, kindly offered to take us across to Ardrossan. He sent one of his boats with half a dozen bluejackets to row us out to the vessel, and we greatly enjoyed the rapid rowing as well as the sail across the Frith in the cutter. We spent Sunday in a hotel, which we thought delightful, and on Monday we went up to Glasgow in one of the



regular coasting steamers. And when the "Glenalbin" put in at Brodick Bay the birds were all flown.

We were soon settled in the old College house, and resumed much the same manner of life as the previous winter. My health was pretty well re-established, but I was scarcely out all winter, and so had plenty of time for carrying on my indoor occupations. Some hours each day were given to John's lessons, and Robert's also ; for they all devolved on me this winter, as Anna was busy with various classes to which she had been sent.

[How earnestly the lessons of the little brothers were carried on by their young teacher is shown in a letter to her aunt at Lisbon, dated January, 1835, in which she says :—

"I have read *Locke on Education* nearly twice through. It was to try and find out how to make Robert like his lessons. I have succeeded a little ; he reads often by himself without being bid ; he is very fond of the history of Joseph and his brethren." Two months later Anna wrote : "Robert has been doing wonders at the reading—he thinks nothing of reading more than a dozen pages of *Frank* in a day ! John also has brightened up wonderfully this winter ;

he is getting on very well with his Latin, and he has commenced mathematics with Elizabeth. Papa is very much pleased with the progress he has been making.”]

The next summer (1836) we spent at Kirn, near Dunoon, and there, while watching the steamers as they passed, James observed the great loss of force caused by the manner in which the paddles struck the water, and rose again carrying an immense weight of water with them. To obviate this loss he invented a wheel, with paddles so adjusted as to dip perpendicularly into the water, strike directly backwards, and rise without encumbrance. He made a perfect little model of his invention, and our father took him up to Glasgow to show it to practical men qualified to judge of its utility. It proved to be completely satisfactory in every respect ; but something to serve the same purpose had been invented and a patent taken out for it only a few weeks before. James was fourteen at this time.

Our father was much interested in parallel scratchings which he observed on the rocks about Kirn, and he explained to us his belief that they were caused by the friction of

glaciers in the glacial period, perhaps millions of years ago. He examined them so narrowly, and took so many friends to see them, that a report spread that he was going to build a house and was considering whether these rocks would make good material for the purpose ; and some of the country people kindly volunteered the information that they made bad building stone.

[The ill-starred kitten of the previous year was succeeded this summer by an equally beloved mongrel puppy, whose advent is thus recorded in a letter from Elizabeth to her aunt :—

“ KIRN, *August 23, 1836.*

“ By particular request I am desired to tell you that the boys have got a dog and called him after the great Irish chieftain, Brian Boru. He is the wonder of the world ; he has four legs and a tail ; he is black as a raven, and has lily-white spots on his feet ; he can eat, drink, and sleep, and bark to perfection. It is conjectured, too, that he even knows his name ; and, to crown all, he likes the boys tremendously, and is a delightful little fellow.”

Though no further record is to be found of this little friend, Lord Kelvin spoke of him with affection so lately as 1901.

From childhood to old age he had a wonderful tenderness for animals. Once in 1892 when he was visiting us in Berkshire he expressed a wish to see the fine antlered deer in a neighbouring park, and we went out in search of them. It was evening, and they had settled for the night among the bracken. We were going to give a shout to rouse them, that they might shew themselves to advantage as they bounded away ; but he pleaded with us not to do so, "because they had just warmed the place where they were lying, and it would be a shame to disturb them." So they were left in peace to their slumbers, and we wended our way home again.

At one time canaries were great favourites with him, and he would sometimes sit writing with a little bird perched on his head.

His parrot, Dr. Redtail, was for many years quite a well-known character in the College, and the following account of a musical performance in two parts occurs in a letter dated December 14, 1891 :—

"Dr. Redtail began to whistle a bar or two of 'The Quaker's Wife,' and I asked if he could whistle the whole of it; 'O yes,' said Uncle

William, 'but he likes best that we should whistle it together, bit about.' Then Uncle William whistled a bar and the parrot took it up, but left off after a few notes, and Uncle William remarked, 'Now you see he expects me to finish it,' which he did." ]

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SNARES OF SOCIETY

I HAD for some time been very anxious to learn oil-painting. A Mr. Cooper was therefore engaged to give Anna and me lessons when we returned to town in October, 1836. We painted in the Museum, and he allowed us to choose our subjects. I decided to copy a head of St. Peter by Rubens, and Anna chose a Dutch picture of a girl carrying a candle, with strong light and shade. We had two lessons, and were much pleased with our teacher; but the third morning he came so tipsy we had to get Dan O'Halloran, the sub-curator, to send him away. So ended our lessons in oil-painting! He was, however, an excellent teacher, and had, in these two lessons, given us useful instruction in the mixing and laying on of colours; and he had made us do at home each day, from memory, what we

had done in the Museum with the picture before us, trying to do it as exactly as we could. This was a good exercise. Anna finished her girl in the Museum really very well, but her work at home was a failure. I managed two copies of St. Peter; the one done in the Museum I gave to William, and the one from memory afterwards found a place in my own dining-room.

This winter a notable event happened—a card was handed in bringing a three weeks' invitation, couched in the third person and addressed to Miss Thomson, asking Dr. Thomson and the Misses Thomson to dine at the Principal's (Principal Macfarlane). The answer accepting was most carefully written; then the important question of dress had to be considered. As we distrusted our own judgment we consulted Aunt Elizabeth. She kindly went a-shopping with us, and a piece of pale blue French merino was bought and given to Mrs. Roxburgh—a tip-top dress-maker, and she trimmed the dresses with pale-blue velvet to match. Long white kid gloves, silk stockings, and white satin shoes were provided; and Uncle Thomas's beautiful



gold necklaces were to complete the attire. But, alas for human hopes ! The exposure shopping on a foggy winter day laid me up with influenza, the intervening weeks were passed in bed, and when the great day came I was still full of aches and unable to rise. Anna was dressed in all her new finery and accompanied our father ; but, poor child, she was too young for such a party, and was very frightened and miserable.

Another invitation soon followed, to a very grand party, and much livelier than Principal Macfarlane's. I wore the new dress and greatly enjoyed everything.

I think it was about the end of 1836, when William was twelve, that James and William made electrical machines for themselves, having become much interested in the study of electricity at the Natural Philosophy class.<sup>1</sup> James's machine was larger and more carefully finished than William's, and longer time was occupied in constructing it ; but William's, though rather rough, served every purpose to

<sup>1</sup> [There is mention of an electrical machine about two years earlier in a letter from Anna to her aunt, dated January, 1835. "James and William are quite delighted just now, having been making an electric machine. It gives strong shocks."]

his own satisfaction. They made them entirely themselves, often cleverly turning to account little things they found in the lumber room ; and with these machines the brothers carried on their experiments happily together with great zeal. The chief thing that I remember is the frequent shocks to which the family in general were subjected, and the collecting of electricity in their large Leyden jars. But their work was really serious, and was continually expanding. They went on to make voltaic piles and galvanic batteries, experimenting with metals and fluids, and on light and heat and magnetic electricity. Soon William's attention was turned to the polarisation of light, and he pursued experiments in this field of enquiry with extraordinary eagerness and delight. The brothers contrived, and themselves made, most, if not all, of the apparatus they used in their experiments ; and thus their inventive faculties were quickened, and originality was promoted. A room with an Arnot stove was set apart for them, and there they carried on their mechanical work and philosophic researches. All this time they were distinguishing themselves in the College

classes, and each first of May we had the pleasure of seeing them go up to receive their prizes from the hands of the Professors.

In Glasgow College it was, and I suppose it still is, the privilege of the students to decide the prizes by their votes; and it was interesting to my father to observe that they were given to those that he himself thought the most worthy. It was his custom to write a private list of his best students in the order of their merit, and he almost always found that the judgment of the class agreed with his own, though he never attempted to influence it. William habitually took the first place, just as in after years, and James the second, though he was the elder. Yet in the whole course of their beautiful lives there never could be perceived the faintest taint of boasting on the one side, or of jealousy on the other—never anything but respect and loving helpfulness. William often acknowledged having learned from James, and James had unbounded pride in William.

[One occasion on which James failed to take a prize, probably owing to ill health, is incidentally mentioned in a letter from William

to his sister Elizabeth. It is the earliest letter of Lord Kelvin which we possess, and it may therefore be interesting to give it in *fac-simile*, though it is very like the letter of any other little boy of eleven or twelve years.]

James was physically not nearly so strong as William. In his early childhood he had a long illness, with extreme emaciation, which nearly proved fatal.

Robert, too, was a delicate boy, and almost from infancy was liable to attacks of severe pain which the doctors for years did not understand. At Largs, where we spent the summer of 1837, he suffered terribly. The paroxysms at times were frightful to witness, and the only thing that seemed to give him relief was to carry him on our backs. Sometimes for a whole night we carried him thus in turns. Then for weeks together he would be quite well and in the gayest spirits till the next attack came on. These attacks became shorter and rarer, and the following winter in town he had none, but the cause of them was not removed—not even discovered.

By the resignation of Dr. Badham in spring, a larger and better house than ours, and

Glasgow, May 24, 1836.

My dear Elizabeth,

Cousin William and Mrs Thomson and all of us except Johnny and Bobby went to Hamilton yesterday. When we came to the gate the woman told us that we could not get in by that gate but to go round to another which was more than a mile off however we got her to let us through. There was <sup>a</sup> picture of Daniel in the lions' den that was worth £40,000. There <sup>was also</sup> a ring of large diamonds about six or seven inches in diameter round the dial plate of a clock. In the picture gallery there ~~was~~ <sup>were a great many</sup> tortoise-shell cabinets all inlaid with precious stones. There were beautiful ornaments of malachite and ~~takes~~ <sup>tablets</sup> inlaid with a rare stone, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> chalcedony<sup>s</sup>, and agates. We saw the cradle that queen Elizabeth was rocked in. We also went to Bothwell castle. In the ruins of the castle I found two jackdaws' nests with young ones in them.

Papa has taken a house at Kinn a mile from Durnoon,  
and we are going down on Friday. Papa has given James a pair  
of scales for taking the specific gravity of things, since he did not  
get a prize.

Cousin William and Mrs Thomson are going away  
to Belfast to morrow at six in the evening in the Mercury.

When will you be going to Newcastle?

We have not begun the steamengine, for papa was not  
wanting us to do it.

Ned Mickleham wrote James a letter and sent with  
it a beautiful crystal of felspar and two or three rockcrystals  
that he found up Glen Rosa

I am,

My dear Elisabeth,

Your affectionate brother,

William Thomson.



farther up the College Court, became vacant. It was offered to our father, and he was glad to make the change. During the summer it was put into beautiful order, and the move of our furniture was accomplished before we came to town. When we were settled our father had several dinner parties, when I of course sat at the head of the table; and in the New Year's holidays a dance was given by way of house-warming.

After this Anna and I were overwhelmed with invitations, and for a short time led very gay lives. I remember one evening going to a dinner party with our father, thence to a private dance for two hours, after which we went to Mrs. James Graham's in the middle of the night, to dress for our first subscription ball, to which her daughter, Mrs. Bartholomew, chaperoned us.

[No wonder the devoted Aunt Agnes became a little anxious about this startling butterfly development of her exemplary young nieces, and wrote to Anna on March 15, 1838:—

“MY DEAREST ANNA,—I do not know whether it is owing to the state of my feelings that your last letter was less pleasing to me than your letters



usually are. I hear that you have had rather a severe illness, and one that there was a fear might have become dangerous ; and yet your only feeling is mortification at being prevented from attending several balls. I know it would be very foolish in me to moralise on the vanity of such amusements. I trust you have intellect and feeling to make the discovery by-and-bye yourself, and I would only become a loser by my ill-timed sermonising, as you would only cease to tell me what you might be about ; and I am far too deeply interested, and attached to you, not to feel that it would be a privation.

“I observe that you now pass over your new dresses very lightly, but I hear from others that you and Elizabeth are the most fashionably attired young ladies possible. I am sure you are very glad to get rid of me and my monitory remarks upon neck-ribbons, etc. However, I am nearly as much pleased to see you neat and nice as you are yourself.”]

We were in a constant round of pleasure for nearly three months, which I must say I enjoyed very much. But looking back, I am sure we were really happier in the peaceful times when we were all so busy together. There were rarely any delightful readings with our father now, as Anna and I were out so much, and all the boys were





JAMES AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth*

otherwise so busy. John had entered college and Robert was at school. But sometimes we did assemble in the old way for reading, and when our father left us for his study, the brothers and sisters generally now wound up with a little dance, instead of rehearsed lectures. These little dances were very pleasant, and I am sure they were good for the brothers by making a lively break in their studies for a short time. We taught them quadrilles and lancers, with the appropriate steps according to the fashion of the time—a branch of education in which they were very deficient. William professed utter scorn for dancing, and had indignantly refused lessons from a master; James had refused them too, though with less show of indignation; but neither of them objected to learn from their sisters, and the lessons ended with merry gallops up and down the long drawing-room. I do not think James ever went to dancing parties; but later, in spite of all his scorn, William enjoyed them very much; and I have a strong suspicion that he privately took some lessons in the art after he was grown up.

## CHAPTER XV

### OUR FIRST TRAVELS

IT was about this time that our father took Anna and me for a trip to Edinburgh, and I remember how the household was early roused by the College watchman that the travelling party might be in time for the coach ; and how, nothing daunted by a wet morning, dark and dreary and without a break in the clouds, we trudged off merrily to the starting place in the Trongate. Three inside seats had been secured, the fourth was occupied by a taciturn old gentleman, and away we rattled in the pelting rain. It was our first experience of mail coach travelling, and full of interest and delight. At Lanark we stopped for breakfast and I poured out tea for the company. Afterwards we visited the extensive mills of New Lanark—the largest

in Scotland—where we saw the raw cotton, rough as it is gathered, put into the machinery, and traced it till it came out fine thread ready for the loom. These mills were founded towards the close of last century [*i.e.* the 18th century] by Mr. Dale, a man who was originally a simple hand-loom weaver. Besides being clever and industrious he was truly good, and did his utmost for the welfare of his workpeople, the number of whom continually increased till they came to be counted by thousands. He established good schools for the children, and would not take them too young into his works, nor till they could read and write and cast accounts. This, of course, was long before there were any Factory Acts. He prospered greatly, and well deserved to prosper. His son-in-law, Robert Owen, succeeded him and carried on his work, largely developing it till the schools became quite famous and looked upon as models. He may be called the inventor of infant schools, for he first instituted them and proved their value. The education in all these schools was provided free for the workpeople. It was these schools that I was so

much interested in seeing when I was a little child.

We were now obliged to hurry to catch the coach for Edinburgh. The road after this ran mostly through a bleak moorland country, very uninteresting seen under a monotonous grey sky. It was a long time dark before we reached Edinburgh, but seeing the streets by lamplight amply compensated for the previous darkness, and I remember our enthusiastic admiration of Princes Street as we drove along its whole length, turning eagerly from the brilliantly-lightly shops on one side, to the spacious gardens, dominated by the ancient castle and the lofty houses of the old town, on the other. We stopped at last at the Waterloo Hotel, quite near the Calton Hill, and during the few days we spent there our father took us to all the public buildings of note. Together we also climbed the Salisbury Crags and the Calton Hill ; we went down to Leith to see the Forth and the shipping ; and we explored the narrow wynds and wonderfully picturesque thoroughfares of Auld Reekie, as well as the stately squares and elegant streets of the modern city.



The summer of 1838 was spent at Gourock, and from there Anna and I paid a delightful visit to Dr. and Mrs. Nichol, who had rented the Manse at the entrance of Glensannox in Arran. Dr. Nichol (who was the Professor of Astronomy in Glasgow College) used to take us frequently out in a boat, and we spent hours rowing about the rocky shore or lazily resting on our oars in some creek, while he read to us Tennyson's Poems, then recently published. It was a privilege to hear him, he brought out the meaning with such clearness and beauty by his sympathy and insight, and by the musical cadences of his voice. For instance, in the *Dream of Fair Women* the effect was marvellous. The contrast between the proud Egyptian Queen, "flashing forth a haughty smile," and the gentle Hebrew maid, "singing clearer than the crested bird, that claps his wings at dawn," was wondrous, and never to be forgotten.

The next winter Robert's malady returned, and he had often severe attacks of pain which began to undermine his general health. By the advice of the Glasgow doctors, therefore,

our father resolved to go to London to consult Sir Astley Cooper, and he took the whole family with him.

On Thursday, May 16th, 1839, at 2 p.m., we embarked in the "City of Glasgow," a fine steamer, and at eleven next morning landed at Liverpool, where we stayed a week sight-seeing.

The following is taken verbatim from a stray bit of an old journal :—

"Friday, May 24th. Rose at six to pack, and left Liverpool for London at half-past nine by the railway. Fares, £2 11s. 3d. each; Jane, the servant, £1 8s. 0d. Before Warrington the country very flat, but rich-looking and prettily diversified with trees, Long stop at Warrington, with steam puffing loudly; afterwards undulating country. Now we pass through a deep cutting—now a tunnel! Now trees flying past! A pretty country—a canal—across a valley; rushing at the rate of thirty-three miles an hour on an embankment high above the surrounding country—Father holding his watch in hand marking speed by the mile posts. Now running over a tedious, tame district—level and bleak; greatly prefer the land of the mountain and the flood. Stopped at Hartford. Not a hill! Just a boundless plain of fields and trees and hedges. Now a lovely little

blue hill far away in Derbyshire! Stopping often—pretty undulating country. Going twenty-eight miles an hour. Stopping at a very pretty village—picturesque church with two towers—bells chiming most musically. Going at a tremendous rate—no less than thirty-six miles an hour! Stopped at Wolverhampton—many tall chimneys. Passing through a long tunnel near Birmingham. Stopped there an hour—took a walk in the busy streets—paid 9d. each for a glass of wine. Off again, flew past many towns which cannot name, and pretty villages looking sweet in evening light. Dark when we reached London. Drove to hotel recommended to us at station—no room. Tried another—no room. At last, after driving by lamp light through interminable streets, we got very handsome rooms in Ragget's Hotel, Dover Street, an elegant drawing-room with three windows down to the floor, and bedrooms to match. The name was appropriate, for there were holes in some of the sheets, so we called it the 'Ragged Hotel' after we saw them, though everything else was very fine—silver tea urn, etc., at breakfast and tea, and stylish waiters to attend; but everything stiff and formal."

No time was lost in getting private lodgings, and as our father thought it best that we should settle in a central place, Anna and I drove with him immediately after breakfast

next morning to the Strand to see what could be had in the quiet streets that run down towards the river. Soon we found most comfortable apartments with Miss Gowdie, 15 Cecil Street.

Next day we walked by the Strand, Ludgate Hill, Temple Bar, and Fleet Street, to St. Paul's. Its stupendous size far exceeded my previous conceptions. But what a pity that houses are built so close all round, that no good view of the vast building can be obtained! We entered the Cathedral to join in the worship, but, I am sorry to say, none of us enjoyed it. The service was all chanted, and seemed to us not solemn enough for divine service. There was no reverential quiet, for people were moving about and going out and in the whole time.

On Monday our father brought Sir Astley Cooper to see Robert. He said an operation was necessary, and ordered some preparatory treatment. In the interval we went sight-seeing with our father. One evening he took Anna and me to the Italian Opera to hear Grisi and Lablache in "Norma." The splendour of the whole scene, as well as the

beauty of the music, deeply impressed us. But one thing followed another so quickly, to excite our wonder and admiration, we could scarcely give due and full attention to each. I think my imagination and interest were more stirred by Westminster Abbey<sup>1</sup> than by anything else I saw.

June 3rd was a solemn day for us. The operation for calculus was performed on Robert, in the presence of Sir Astley Cooper, by his nephew, Mr. Tyrrell. I saw the poor little boy stretched, all bound, on the table before the operation began, and stood on the mat outside the door while it was going on, listening to his moans—it seemed a long time—and I was the first admitted when it was over. He was laid on the bed nicely arranged, looking very flushed and distressed. There was no chloroform in those days to drown pain. But he was very brave and patient. Indeed, he had often suffered so terribly, the hope of permanent relief helped to give him courage. For some days at first there was a degree of anxiety lest he should fever, but all went well; he recovered fast

[<sup>1</sup> Where William, Lord Kelvin, now rests.]

and steadily, and soon all fears were set at rest, and his spirits became quite buoyant.

We remained in London till Robert was quite well, occupying the necessary four weeks in making ourselves acquainted with the great city as far as possible in that time. Our father had been in London only once before, that was in 1822, and he much enjoyed taking us to see all that had interested himself on that occasion, and observing the many changes and the great extension of the city that had taken place during the long interval. He took us walks in the beautiful parks and fashionable squares, and along the streets crowded with magnificent equipages and exhibiting every sign of splendid luxury ; and as a contrast he led us through some of the narrow streets and gloomy lanes in the city, lined with offices and warehouses, and also through some of the squalid recesses where the poverty-stricken and ill-doing are huddled together in dirt and misery. He took us to all the sights from the British Museum, Tower, Colosseum, etc., down to Madam Tussaud's Waxworks and Miss Linwood's copies of paintings in needlework ; and to

the various picture galleries, including Dulwich and Hampton Court, where Raphael's cartoons were then kept. We went out to Greenwich, but we did not see so much in the Observatory as we hoped, as Professor Airy was from home. We were more fortunate at the Hospital, for we were shewn everything there, and we had pleasant talks with several old pensioners. We went to the different theatres several times, as well as to the Opera. One night at the Haymarket we saw Helen Faucit and Macready in *The Lady of Lyons*, and Farren in the afterpiece. We saw several of Shakespeare's plays acted. In particular I remember *Richard III.*, and a splendid new production of *Henry V.*, that was making a great sensation at the time. Sheridan Knowles was staying in London while we were there, and we saw him act along with Ellen Tree. He personated the Hunchback in a play written by himself that was popular that season. He came to see us and brought Miss Tree. He was the old friend of the Belfast days, who had given Anna and me lessons in elocution.

We dined out two or three times, once at



Sir John Macneil's and once at Mr. Maclean's, both of them engineers with whom our father was glad to have an opportunity of consulting about the advisability of James taking up engineering as his profession.

The last evening we were in London we dined with Mr. Rintoul, the editor of the *Spectator*. Here we met Mr. Gibbon Wakefield, the once famous agitator, who was several times imprisoned for promulgating doctrines now almost universally accepted—vote by ballot, for example. In his autobiography, speaking of his friend Mr. Rintoul, he says, "It was his religion to produce a perfect newspaper, and in that sense he was the most religious man in his profession. If there be newspapers in the other world, no doubt he is the first journalist there."

Anna and I were taken to a great ball, somewhere in the country, by Mr. Porter of Belfast, who had recently been appointed Attorney-General at the Cape, and who was in London to be presented to the Queen before his departure. I do not remember the name of the people who gave the ball, nor yet the name of their place; but it was a

good long drive to reach it. We danced all night, till the rays of the rising sun streamed through the opened windows and parted curtains, making the tired dancers look wan and worn. The drive home in the sweet morning air was pleasant and interesting. We saw the vast metropolis just waking to the life of a new day, and a cool freshness pervaded the streets. Market carts were rumbling in to supply its many wants; sleepy men were lazily unbarring shop shutters; only a few blinds were drawn up; only a few early passengers were hurrying along the thoroughfares, so soon to be swarming with bustling crowds. The river and the shipping looked most beautiful as we passed along one of the bridges in the bright summer morning.

William and I were in the habit of rising very early, and taking a walk together while the others were still in bed. We generally went to St. James' Park, carrying some bread with us to feed the water-fowl, and a dried apple or two with which to refresh ourselves while we sat on one of the seats chatting. But we often went into Westminster Abbey

and spent a quiet time examining its monuments and architecture. These little morning rambles have left gentle memories sweet to recall.

On the first of July we all started for the Continent *via* Southampton. We left London by rail, but we had not gone very far when we had to change to coaches, as a large portion of the middle part of the railway was still unfinished; after two hours and a half's driving we again entered a railway carriage, and so reached Southampton.

Next morning we engaged a roomy carriage, to visit Netley Abbey and drive about the town and its beautiful environs. We had a most delightful day; and in the evening, when the rays of the setting sun were streaming over the quivering sea, we sailed for Havre, and early next morning we set foot on French ground! We breakfasted at a Hotel on the quay, and watched with eager curiosity the busy excited crowds running to and fro, till we were summoned to go on board the steamer for our sail up the Seine.

Our father, travelling with his six children and their very Scotch maid, attracted general

observation. Not a few spoke to us, and expressed much surprise on learning that "*s'amuser*" was the sole object of our travels.

After a fortnight of wonder and delight spent in Paris, our father made arrangements for taking Anna and me to Switzerland. The boys were left in Paris with our old servant Jane; a Madame Putois was engaged to speak and read French with them daily, and drill them in the language; and Mr. Smith, a cultivated young Englishman, whose acquaintance we had made when sailing up the Seine, promised to look after them; so our father left them with an easy mind.

For the journey a large travelling carriage was hired by the month, and our luggage was packed in the great leather imperial on the top. Thus, early on a magnificent July morning, we rattled out of Paris, with two postillions cracking their whips madly, and urging the four horses to dash along at the top of their speed. This was to make a sensation in the street; for when we got fairly beyond the city our pace was regulated with more moderation. But all through our travels, when approaching

or leaving a town or post-house, the same lively demonstration was repeated. Even when simply passing through a little village we drove furiously, at the risk of running over the poor little children who rushed out to see the sport.

After visiting several interesting old French towns, we started one morning from Dole to begin the journey into Switzerland by Napoleon's road over the Jura. The first part of the way was exceedingly tiresome, along a scorched and dusty plain; but when we came to the ascent of the mountains, every turn of the winding road presented new beauties, and the weary plain we had just traversed had a grandeur of its own when we looked down upon it spreading out into the remote distance. It was very cold at St. Laurent, the highest point in the pass, but we enjoyed our supper beside a blazing fire in the little post-house inn; and with plenty of bed-clothes we all slept well, and were ready early next morning to drive a stage and breakfast at Mores. It was very grey and gloomy when we started, and the blasted fir trees, stretching their dead arms here and

there out of the mist, gave a feeling of dreary desolation.

Soon thunder began to growl, and lightning to dart from crag to crag. The storm grew furious and the horses became excited ; at last a fiery bolt struck the mountain-side a few yards in front of us, shivered the rocks into splinters, and tossed them in masses on the road, while the tremendous roar of the accompanying thunder was appalling. The four terrified animals reared and plunged, and would have dashed the carriage over the precipice into the deep valley below—for there was no parapet—had not the postillions held them firmly, and with most amazing speed detached their fastenings. For a few moments the whole equipage was in the extremity of danger. I happened to be on the rumble for the sake of the view, and beheld the whole of this awful scene. Seeing the village of Mores far below us, and the road to it winding down the mountain-side in many curves, we resolved to walk the rest of the stage, leaving the carriage to follow when the excitement of the horses should have subsided. Though the thunder

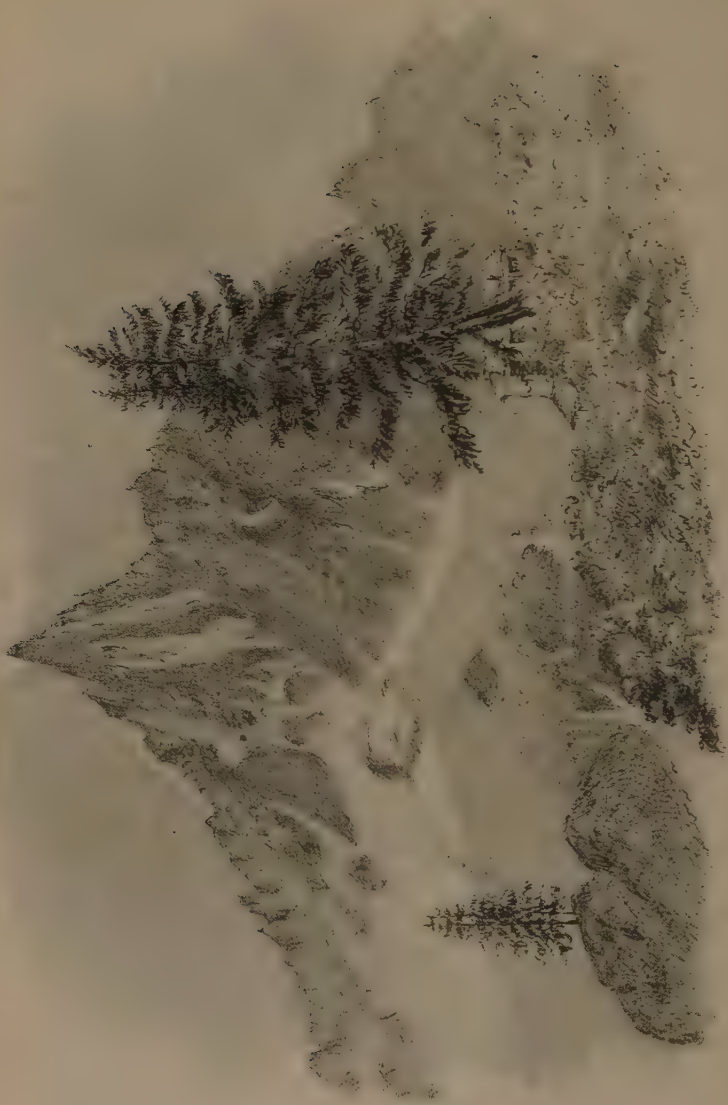


continued its deafening roar, and the walk was long, we were fortunate in reaching shelter before the rain began. A torrential downpour detained us for nearly three hours, and when we started again it was in mist or cloud so dense we could not see either side of the road. Suddenly—in an instant—as we descended it parted, and, like magic, the Lake of Geneva with its girdling plain, and the snowy Alps beyond with their monarch enthroned in their midst, lay spread beneath and before us in unclouded splendour.

From Geneva we went to Chamounix. But our large travelling carriage was far too cumbrous for the narrow steep road which was then the only approach to the famous valley ; so we had to leave it for the time being, and take a much smaller one for this expedition. We arrived at Sallenche about five and stopped for the night. Here it was found that even the small carriage provided for us at Geneva was impracticable for the rude mountain road still to be traversed, so it was next left behind, and a couple of tiny *char-a-bancs* engaged to carry us on to Chamounix. The whole of the two days'







THE MONTANVERT AND THE NEEDLES

drive was grand beyond description, but in spite of all the beauty and glory, we were glad when at a late hour we reached the village, and found ourselves settled in the snug little inn, a wood fire crackling on the hearth, and a comfortable repast spread before us.

We stayed there two days, one of which we spent going up the Montanvert on mules as far as the Mer de Glace, and walking a considerable distance out on the glacier. On our way back we saw for the first time the lovely rosy tints of an Alpine sunset, Mont Blanc himself and some of his giant brethren catching the crimson glow which was reflected like millions of jewels in the swift flowing Arve.

After returning to Geneva, and remaining there long enough to see something of the neighbourhood, we set out on our travels again. As there were no posting arrangements in Switzerland we had to engage a *voiturier* with his three horses to drive our carriage, and these went with us all the time we were in the country. It was pleasant travelling, though it would not suit persons in a hurry, for the horses jogged on very leisurely, and we

had to give them a long rest in the middle of the day. We did not object to this pause however, for it allowed us to dine at some nice little village inn, and walk about the lanes and fields, sometimes having a chat with the country people who were always very friendly and communicative. Then came a long afternoon and evening drive, and the arrival at a nice inn with a friendly greeting from the hospitable landlord. There were not great hotels then all over the country, though some of those in the towns were very large.

In this way we visited Lausanne, Freiburg, Bern and Thun, from whence we sent the carriage to await us at Lucerne, while we made a tour on horse-back through the Bernese Oberland.

One morning we were early in the saddle climbing the zig-zags of the Wengern Alp on our way to Grindelwald. This ride occupied the whole day, as we often dismounted and turned aside to clamber up the rocks and gather flowers.

But as we descended towards Grindelwald we had to quicken our movements, for the

sky had become overcast, and there were symptoms of impending storm. Very soon after we reached the inn it burst with fury, and from the windows we witnessed a tempest of extraordinary magnificence. The Wetterhorn, Faulhorn, Schreckhorn, and other mighty peaks, appeared and disappeared among the whirling, wreathing clouds in which they were wrapped, while the lightning shot from peak to peak, and the loud thunder, with continuous roar, reverberated among the mountains. Then came hail and rain, pelt-ing on the roof and windows as if to break them in.

William Bottomley, who had been an old pupil of our father's in Belfast, arrived just after us, and, seeing our names in the visitors' book, he sent in his card, asking if he might come up to our room and spend a little time with us. Permission being granted, he entered in the midst of the storm ; and this was the first time Anna saw her future husband. They seemed greatly pleased with each other at first sight, and she sat at the table beside our father, talking with him, while I returned to my place at the window and resumed a sketch I

had begun. Afterwards I gave her a painting from this sketch, which she hung in her own drawing-room. When darkness put an end to my work, being very tired, I said "Good-night," but she remained pretty late in the sitting-room, and when at last she came upstairs and I was half asleep, she worried me by descanting on "that delightful young man!"

Next day the sun rose bright and beautiful, and we were up betimes to explore the surroundings of the little inn—the Hotel de l'Ours, as it was called. There were only two little inns at Grindelwald at that time, and ours was the first coming down from the Wengern Alp. I mention this because, in those days, the lower glacier came so far down into the valley it touched the wall of the little garden; and when we were in Grindelwald many years later it had retired so far back I had difficulty in recognising the ground. The inn, too, was changed, for it had grown into a great hotel, bearing, however, the old name.

By seven o'clock we had breakfasted and were fairly off on our mountain ride over the great Scheideck on the way to Brienz. The scenery was wilder and grander than



GRINDELWALD

*From Elizabeth's Pencil Drawing*

To face p. 162





ever, and the way more difficult, so that the three guides had enough to do to lead the horses, and help us to scramble along at places where it was impossible to keep in the saddle. The Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn had again become veiled in clouds, and their peaks, bursting fitfully into view as the mists rolled hither and thither, seemed to overhang the path. Soon we were ourselves enveloped in the clouds, with savage rocks jutting out on every side, and here and there little patches of scanty vegetation, all dimly seen through the mist. On the summit of the pass there was a chalet where refreshment could be had, and we were glad to pause and rest. Coming down, we by-and-bye entered a great pine forest where many of the trees were scathed by lightning, and long lines of them overturned by rolling avalanches. Here rain began to fall, and soon it poured persistently and drenchingly, and we reached our destination very tired and travel-stained. Next morning we began the ascent of the Brunig, which seemed more dangerous than anything we had yet experienced. The rude path was very narrow, scarcely giving a footing to the

horses, with only a handrail of the slightest description, and often no protection whatever, between it and the tremendous depths below, while precipices towered above us on the other hand. It was fearful. Often our feet hung over the abyss while the patient horses crept cautiously along, the guides holding their heads, and their sides rubbing against the wall-like mountain. In this way we reached the village of Lungern, where a tolerable road began; so we left the horses behind with two of the guides, and got a nice little open carriage, in which we drove along the borders of Lake Lungern and Lake Sarnen. Many pretty and comfortable-looking chalets now dotted the green pastures that spread themselves around wherever the mountains receded from the shore, and the pleasant music of the tinkling cow bells filled the air.

Soon we came in sight of the Lake of Lucerne—the part called the “Bras d’Alpnach.” The setting sun, gleaming through an opening in the clouds, illumined two great mountains on the opposite side of the unruffled water, while the rest of the landscape lay fading in the twilight. Here we

stopped for the night in a sweet, primitive little inn, where we happened to be the only guests. The kind old landlord waited on us himself at table with a napkin over his arm, chatting cheerily all the time, and his very pretty daughter attended us in our bedrooms as if she had been our maid. There was an old piano in the drawing-room, on which, after supper, I struck up "St. Patrick's Day," "Sprig of Shillelagh," "Protestant Boys," etc., etc., which gathered the whole household. I was encored again and again, and finally they all set a-dancing merrily to the lively music. Next morning we were roused at four, and by five we had walked down to the lake, where a rowing boat was ready to take us to Lucerne. The whole family at the inn, servants included, came with us to the shore to see us off and wish us "Bon voyage"; and at parting Anna and I were each presented with a lovely bouquet.

Many years after, when at Lucerne with my invalid husband, I induced him to make a pilgrimage with me to Alpnach, to see the family at the little inn which had so much charmed my own dear father and Anna and

myself in days of old. The house was there, but its kindly inhabitants were gone. The good old landlord slept his long sleep under the green turf. We sought and found the spot where he lay ; flowers were blooming over him, and bees and birds were making melody around. His pretty daughter was married and settled at a distance. But the people who occupied the place were pleased with our visit, and promised to give her a greeting from us.

I return to the long, long ago, when the vista of life opened fair before me, and lost itself far away in dreamy distance. Now it has been traversed, and I look back over it with grateful love. At present I vividly recall the lovely, placid morning when we bade farewell to the little group gathered on the shore of the Bras d'Alpnach, and stepped into the pretty boat, with its white awning, waiting to take us to Lucerne. As we skimmed along we saw the first beams of the rising sun touch with gold the tip of the highest mountain, and watched them creep downwards till every peak and rock, every

pasture slope and every tree, was revealed in contrasted light and shade, and the broad, calm lake lay glittering in the joyous sunshine.

From Lucerne we started off again in our carriage for Zurich and Schaffhausen, and so on to Basle, where we took a sorrowful farewell of beautiful Switzerland. We were sorry also to part with our friendly *voiturier*, but we no longer needed him, as, after this, post-horses and postillions were available. We had now French postillions, who dashed off in the same grand style in which we left Paris, and at every town and village we entered they cracked their whips and urged their horses as before, making the streets ring with their noise.

Our tour after this took us to Strasburg, Baden Baden, Karlsruhe, and Heidelberg. From there the journey to Darmstadt was very long and unvaried. We drove mostly through the forest scenery of the Odenwald, which extends for fifty miles. There was something strangely impressive about that drive—on, and on, and on, along the seemingly interminable straight road, through the dense, dark forest, seeing no living thing, and

hearing no sound but the drip of incessant rain, the quiet rumble of our own carriage, and the jingle of the horses' bells : their tramp was not heard, or scarcely heard, for the road was soft and often grassy.

Our next stopping place was Frankfort, where we lingered longer than usual, and took the opportunity of somewhat renovating our dress, which had suffered severely during our travels, especially that of Anna, who arrived in a bonnet without a crown, and with a great piece torn out of the front of her dress.

When we got back to Paris we found the boys quite well and happy. They had made excellent progress in French with Madame Putois, and Mr. Smith had been very kind in his attentions to them. Two youths named Murphy, of a family we had known well in Belfast, had been living in Paris for some months, and our boys were so fortunate as to meet them ; and they explored the city, and made several excursions in the neighbourhood together, notably to Versailles and St. Cloud.

After our return, we remained in Paris ten



days or a fortnight. Anna and I were partly occupied in getting beautiful silk dresses and fine bonnets and shawls—which last were much worn at that time both by older ladies and young girls. Our father always helped us to choose, and he had a very refined taste in dress. We all did a great deal of sight-seeing both in town and in the environs. One of the things that pleased us most was the famous china manufactory at Sèvres. It interested us much more than Versailles, which was rather a disappointment to us.

On our way home we stayed more than a week in London, in lodgings quite near the British Museum, which we often visited ; and it was on September 21st that we returned to Glasgow.

## CHAPTER XVI

### TRIP TO GERMANY

THE next winter, 1839-40, Anna and I were very gay, being invited to many dinners with our father, besides going to numbers of balls and evening parties. Indeed, we were not a little lionised for a time as great travellers. I, however, still superintended Robert's lessons, as he was not yet strong enough for school. He was a pleasant little pupil, and did very well, though I fear the butterfly life I was leading tended to distract my attention sometimes. John was now a student at the University, and, though not so brilliant as William and James, he was taking a high place.

[In the following year he was awarded the Breadalbane prize of ten sovereigns by the unanimous vote of his fellow students.]

The two elder brothers resumed their studies vigorously, and continued to distinguish

themselves, whilst laying a good foundation for whatever career they might afterwards pursue. They attended the Natural Philosophy class this winter under Dr. Meikleham, but as he had become rather frail, Dr. Nichol assisted him. James began going regularly to the Lancefield mills to study the machinery and gain experience in this direction, and he continued doing so for several months. They both took the degree of M.A. at the close of the session, May, 1840. In May, 1839, they had both taken the degree of B.A.<sup>1</sup>

There was one thing at which we all worked together, namely German, with which we were but slightly acquainted. Our father had enjoyed the tour of the previous summer so much he determined to travel again the next summer, and spend the time chiefly in Germany. Accordingly Mr. Goldenberg, a teacher lately come to Glasgow, was engaged to give us a lesson two or three times a week,

<sup>1</sup> [They both passed the examination for B.A. in 1839, and for M.A. in 1840 ; but on each occasion James alone took the degree, as William understood that his position in Cambridge would be better if he went there without having graduated in another University. In writing, about this time, to his brother, he sometimes styled himself B.A.T.A.I.A.P., that is " B.A. to all intents and purposes."—E. T. K.]

and our father himself joined the little class. We were kept hard at work, for the lesson lasted an hour and a half, and much was given us to prepare. I think Anna applied herself most, and was the best pupil among us ; but the master was astonished at our father's progress, and " quite surprised," as he said, " at his philosophic remarks."

We were all to keep together on our second expedition to the Continent. Our father explained to us that he had taken only Anna and me to Switzerland the year before because he thought girls would have less chance than boys of travelling in after life.

About the middle of May, 1840, we left the Broomielaw on board the " Admiral," and steamed down the Clyde in the midst of a whirling snow-storm. Liverpool was reached next morning, and we proceeded without delay to Birmingham. There we spent the night and went on to London early the following day. Edward Meikleham awaited us at the station, and took us to lodgings he had secured for us at 50 Southampton Row, Bloomsbury.

It was settled with Sir John MacNeil on the 25th of May, that he should take Edward

Meikleham and James as pupils, on our return from Germany in autumn.

On the 27th, at six in the morning, we left London for Rotterdam in a poor little steamer, very unlike the splendid "Admiral" and other fine vessels plying on the Clyde. We reached our destination next forenoon after a rough passage, and a horrible tossing for nearly three hours while waiting till the tide allowed of our crossing the bar. Right glad were we at last to step ashore, and walk under the shade of stately overhanging trees to our hotel upon the quay, at a little distance from the landing place. We had delightful rooms, and we stayed about a week enjoying to the utmost our rambles in this most picturesque of cities. There are canals in most of the streets, generally bordered with trees, but sometimes the houses rise directly out of the water, so that anything dropped from a window would fall into it.

The perfect cleanliness and freshness everywhere struck us very much. We used to watch the women, in their pattens and spotless aprons, in the early mornings, at work with their great syringes, and mops, and pails

of water, cleaning the windows and walls of the houses, and scrubbing the pavement till not a speck of dirt was to be seen anywhere ; using knives to pick away any tiny weed that dared to show itself between the neat stones of the foot-way.

Very early one lovely morning we bade good-bye to Rotterdam, and set out on our pilgrimage up the Rhine in the "Comet," a steamboat with a large deck partly covered with an awning, and provided with comfortable sleeping cabins besides a spacious dining-room. We were bound for Bonn, and the sail occupied two days and one night. It would have been dreary steaming so slowly up the river, seeing only the top of a spire or windmill now and then peering over the sedgy banks which hid all view of the country, had we not met some remarkably pleasant people on board. Besides agreeable Germans, with whom we could now converse a little in their own language, there were many who were glad to talk English with us. Among these there was a charming Baroness with whom we made great friends ; and there was also a lively party of Dublin Guinnesses.

At Emmerich the Custom House officer came on board to inspect the passengers' luggage which had been previously arranged along the deck. Naturally we had a good many trunks, among them an empty one which, taught by experience, we had prudently taken with us to carry our purchases. Seeing our long row, the Custom House officer said he would only examine one, if we would give him the keys and let him select for himself. He made an unlucky choice, and a derisive cheer arose from a crowd of onlookers when he threw up the lid, and, without looking, dived his hands down to toss up the contents, and met with nothing but emptiness. His face of amazement was comical to behold; but he kept his word and searched no further.

At Bonn we first put up at the Sternhof, a nice hotel on the wide market-place, but we soon made arrangements with the widow of Dr. Strahl, one of the professors, who had a very large house, to receive us as lodgers. Dr. Nichol joined us here with his wife and little son Johnnie (afterwards Professor of English Literature in Glasgow University),



so we were a large and very lively party. Frau Strahl had two beautiful daughters, the same age as Anna and I. They were pleasant companions and guides in our walks, and soon we arranged daily readings with them—in German for us, in English for them.

Dr. Nichol took James and William a two or three days' ramble over the volcanic region of the Sieben Gebirge, and it was pre-arranged that the whole party should meet for an early breakfast at Königswinter on the last morning of their little tour, and ascend the Drachenfels together. We took the steamer to Königswinter, and there met the tourists and found a sumptuous *déjeuner à la fourchette* ready for the party. This despatched, we set off on our climb.

[*Letter from Elizabeth to her Aunt.*

“FRANKFORT, June, 1840.

. . . “Our object was to ascend the mountain to see the magnificent prospect from the summit. Papa got a Leghorn hat to wear on this occasion, and even went the length of trying on a blouse. However, his professional dignity could not brook to be so very far lowered as to appear among the

rocks equipped not only in a white hat but in a blouse too! As James is no professor there could be no objection to his wearing both hat and blouse, and as William could get none to fit him he very nearly went in his nightgown. Dr. Nichol appeared a model of grace in a white carter's frock—indeed it was most becoming to him.”]

It was a perfect summer day; the heat tempered by a gentle breeze laden with perfume from the wild flowers blooming along the path, which wound upwards disclosing varied beauties at every turn. The vast plain that had seemed so wearisome as we sailed along, was always a more and more magnificent spectacle the higher we ascended the mountain-side; the river gleamed like silver, the towns and villages sparkled like jewels decorating the lovely robe spread over the land; and gradually the whole expanse became blended in the softest, lightest summer haze, where earth and sky seemed to meet in the extreme distance. Turning to the right the eye fell on a rough scene of wild desolation—huge rocks tossed about like the ruins of a world. Further down, the Rhine

swept majestically, from Nonnenwerth and Rolandseck, round the base of the mountain where we stood. After a long rest on the top, sheltered from the heat by the mouldering walls of the old castle, we came down to Königswinter, and thence rowed to Nonnenwerth, where we enjoyed the refreshment of tea and had a little stroll about the island before the steamboat called to take up passengers. It was night when we got home.

Dr. Nichol had admired what he had seen of Nonnenwerth so much that he persuaded our father, when we were about to leave Bonn, to allow Anna and me to precede the rest of the party and go there with him and Mrs. Nichol on a Saturday evening, spend Sunday on the island, and meet the others the following Monday morning in the steamer to go on to Coblenz. Accordingly, late on Saturday evening we set off in high spirits. The sun had long set when we reached our destination, and perfect solitude and silence prevailed, broken only by the croaking of the frogs. Drawn up on the grass close to the landing place, Dr. Nichol spied a little boat

and exclaimed, "Wouldn't it be romantic to row round Rolandseck by moonlight?" Eager assent having been given, the idea was put into instant execution. The boat was hauled down and launched, and off we went,—Dr. Nichol acting as oarsman. We pulled up the river a good way under the shade of Rolandseck, and returning along the other side of the island, we passed Königswinter and the Drachenfels at the dead of night, when no sound was heard but the gentle plash of the oars, and everything looked peaceful and lovely in the clear light of the full moon. It was past midnight when we rang at the door of the old nunnery (which had been transformed into a hotel), and we had long to wait before the sleepy old porter answered our summons. No housemaid or other attendant appearing, he guided us by the glimmer of a dying lamp, through intricate passages, between the cells where pious nuns of bygone days told their beads and slumbered on their pallet beds, to a wide stair by which we reached a long corridor with a beautiful gothic window at the further end, through which a flood of moonbeams streamed on the

floor, and the ivy, quivering in the night air, cast its trembling shadows. There were closed doors on either hand as we passed along ; but at last we came to four that stood invitingly open, which he signed to us to enter, and left us to go supperless to bed with the lovely moon for a candle. We found ourselves in very small white-washed rooms, each furnished with a little uncurtained iron bed, slender washing apparatus, and one chair. Next morning we woke to glorious sunshine, and found a poetic breakfast spread for us in a leafy bower, by Dr. Nichol's orders—coffee, buns, and heaped dishes of beautiful cherries and fresh wild strawberries. The day was passed wandering over the little island, and sitting together reading in the shade.

There was a very large company in the hotel, and at one o'clock the guests assembled in a great hall for dinner. About one hundred and fifty sat down at the long narrow table—we, as the last comers, at the very bottom. Far from us on a plateau in the middle we saw a very stately decorative dish. Dr. Nichol told us it was boar's head stewed in





ON THE RHINE

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth*



Burgundy wine, a famous national dish. He said we must dine on it ; so as each course was offered he refused and made us do the same. At length two waiters removed the stately dish, and as it was carried off he rubbed his hands, exclaiming, "Now we shall have some dinner !" But, alas ! it disappeared, and the company rose and scattered. It was simply an ornamental centre-piece of wood !

In the steamboat on Monday we rejoined the party left behind, and went as far as Coblentz, gliding through the picturesque scenery, with its numberless old castles perched on the rocks, and clusters of little houses nestling beneath.

In sailing up the Rhine we were all amused watching the rafts, flat-bottomed boats, and floats, carrying goods on the river. But James was more than amused, his inventive brain was set a-working. Those coming *down* only needed guidance, but those going *up* were laboriously propelled by men with long poles pushing against the bottom. James watched and pondered, pondered long and seriously, and an ingenious

contrivance was the result, by which a boat could be propelled up a river by the downward force of the current itself.<sup>1</sup>

We stayed a day at Coblenz, and next morning we sailed to Mainz, still through beautiful river scenery, and immediately engaged carriages to take us on to Frankfort. There we put up at the Wurtemberg Hotel ; but within a week we had not only taken a house, but furnished it, and engaged a cook to do the work along with our Scotch servant and some help from the porter. They all got on splendidly together. Both the women were good-natured and accommodating, and it was quite wonderful how quickly they came to understand each other. We were very fortunate in our house, which was beautifully

<sup>1</sup> In the following summer, 1841, when we were in Arran, he worked at this invention a great deal ; but owing to various impediments, broken health being the chief, he was not able to finish a good model for a long time. In 1847, when I was visiting my father in Arran with my two little children, and James was still very much of an invalid, I well remember his experimenting with these models in a rapid stream that flowed through the grounds, and astonishing our friends by showing them his flat-bottomed boats walking up the little river of themselves. The machinery worked perfectly, while the depth was equal, but a want of the power of adaptation was its weak point, and I do not think he ever got over that difficulty.

situated in an angle of the promenades, near the Eschenheimer Thor, several of the windows looking out on the fine grounds of one of the Rothschilds. In these quarters we lived for eight weeks. A Mr. Ganz was engaged to give us German lessons. He came at eight o'clock every morning to converse and read with us—our father being one of his pupils.

At Frankfort it was James and I who were generally companions in an early walk. Breakfast was regularly served at seven, yet I think we never failed to have a pleasant ramble before it in the delicious morning air, when all the shrubs and flowers on the promenade were sparkling with dew.

Before setting out on our travels William had got Fourier's *Théorie Analytique de la Chaleur* from the college library, and when studying the book one day he suddenly sprang from the stool on which he was sitting and excitedly exclaimed, "Papa! Fourier is right, and Kelland is wrong!" Our father was rather incredulous; but on examination he found that in the points in which Kelland had declared Fourier mistaken it was Kelland

himself who was mistaken, and not Fourier. He made the boy write an article for the *Cambridge Mathematical Journal* and sent it to Gregory, the editor. It was shown to Kelland before it was published. At first he was very much annoyed, but after some expressions had been altered he was satisfied to let it appear. William had been told that at Frankfort he was to give his attention to German, but he used to escape to the trunk room where he kept his Fourier; and when his father found out these secret studies he was not very severe with him.

I may add that Kelland became very friendly with William, and as long as he lived the friendship continued.

While we were in Frankfort a great festival was held in honour of Gutenberg, Faust, and Schoeffer, three men who were considered the principal inventors of printing, and a group of statuary representing them was unveiled on the occasion. A gentleman, whose name I forget, asked us to view the ceremony from his windows along with a large number of other guests; and afterwards we went to a state dinner at the Consul's, where we met





HEIDELBERG CASTLE

*From Elizabeth's Pencil Drawing*

all the dignitaries of Frankfort and several foreigners of distinction.

At six one fine morning in August we started for Baden. For the journey we had a very big open carriage with three sturdy horses, driven by a good-natured, intelligent coachman, who delighted in giving us information about everything as we went along. Jane, the maid, sat up beside him, and aired her newly acquired German with him most amusingly; while two of the party always sat on the outside seat at the back.

We paused two days in Heidelberg at the Adler Hof. The first day, while the others were exploring the ruins, I made a drawing of the castle, and the second day we had a lovely drive up the Neckar as far as Neckarsteinach.

We enjoyed Baden. The promenades and gardens are charming, and the environs afford endless beautiful walks and drives. On one of the hills there is a picturesque ruin called the Alte Schloss, which is connected with the Neue Schloss down in the town by a long underground passage. We spent a day up at the Alte Schloss, and while the others



were ascending higher, when Robert was resting after climbing the trees, I made the pencil portrait of him that always hangs in my own room.<sup>1</sup>

We made a pleasant excursion into the Black Forest to see Eberstein Castle, where a certain Duchess Sybilla had left behind many traces of her existence. In her youth she was gay, giddy, and vain. She had her rooms sumptuously fitted up ; one of those we saw had not only its walls, but its ceiling also, entirely covered with small mirrors, carefully fitted, so that no spot could be found where her own face and figure were not reflected. After seeing the interior of the castle we were taken to a hut among the fir trees at a little distance, where she passed her later years in penitence ; and we were shown the bare,

<sup>1</sup>[That sketch hung in my mother's room close by her bed until her death, that she might never forget night and morning to think of her far-away brother, who was to the last an object of anxious and tender solicitude. He went out to the Colonies at the age of 21, soon after their father's death, and never revisited his native land or saw any of his brothers and sisters again. We sent the little drawing to him when our mother was gone ; and a few years later, hearing that he was growing old and frail and blind, my sister and I went out to Melbourne to see him. His affectionate remembrance of his sister-mother was very touching. He died in 1905, about a year after our visit.—E.T.K.]

rough table, at which she ate her coarse meals in the company of three wooden figures, large as life, dressed to personate three of the Apostles, to whom the food was offered before it was presented to her. They were still sitting there patiently at the old table, while she had long been mouldering in her grave.

Our father allowed James and William to go off by themselves for a few days on a little pedestrian tour in the Black Forest. It seemed very pleasant, but it turned out disastrous for poor James. Something in his shoe hurt one of his feet and caused him to put more stress on the other leg, but he trudged on, giving little heed to the inconvenience. When he came home he mentioned the circumstance ; the offending shoes were dismissed ; he went about as usual, and nobody thought more of the matter, or imagined any mischief was going on ; but the knee began to swell, giving him, however, so little pain or annoyance, he did not speak of it for many weeks, when it was found the joint was seriously injured, and long disablement was the consequence.

While we remained in Baden we commonly spent the evening in the public gardens, listening to the music and scrutinising the gay throng that was moving to and fro in all directions. One very pretty and elegantly dressed young lady attracted our attention, above all others, by her merry laughter and sportive grace. We learned she was a Russian bride on her wedding jaunt, and she was of high rank. Two or three evenings after first seeing her, when we entered the gaming saloons, as our custom was, to watch the players for a little at the silent tables, we observed her, like ourselves, standing in the encircling crowd. By-and-bye she gaily tossed a gold piece on to the table, and was politely asked to sit down and join the game. Laughing to her friends, she took the offered place and began to play. Soon a heap of money was swept over to her, and she left the table beaming with pleasure at her success. After this she was to be seen every evening among the players, and gradually she deserted the gardens to spend the day, as well as the evening, at the gaming tables. Before we left her pretty face had become eager, haggard,

and careworn. We did pity the poor young creature. A most tragic case came under our immediate notice, as it happened during our stay. A young French gentleman had been entrusted by his Government with the conveyance of a large sum, for what purpose I do not know. On his way he stopped at Baden Baden with no intention of lingering ; but he was tempted to try one game, then another, and another ; fortune was against him, but he went on risking and losing money till all his own was gone ; then, lured by the hope that the tide of fortune would turn, he dared to risk the treasure committed to his charge, and in desperation continued to play till it too was lost ; then in his agony he rushed out at midnight and hanged himself on a tree in the public garden. Some of us were taking an early walk and witnessed the consternation of the crowd that gathered when the body was found.

This dreadful occurrence so shocked us that all our enjoyment in Baden vanished, and we left immediately to return home down the Rhine as we had come up. We passed a few days in Frankfort, and while there our

indulgent father gave Anna and me each a dress of the richest Genoa velvet, made for us by a great tailor who, we were told, had on various occasions made for the Empress of Russia and other royal ladies. These dresses were made with trains, the first we had ever had. We stopped also a few days in London, to arrange matters for James entering on the apprenticeship agreed on in May. It was settled he should go to Dublin, where Sir J. MacNeil had important work going on in the building of bridges, etc.

This was the first flutter from the parental nest ; but the flutterer soon sought its comforting shelter again.

## CHAPTER XVII

### COMING CHANGES

By the end of September we were all, with the exception of James, established once more for the winter in the cosy old college house in the dear old court.

Some time in November poor James came home, suffering much from his injured knee. For a time he was quite lame and disabled, but when he got better he went in spring for some hours every day to the Lancefield Spinning Mills. His general health, however, being much enfeebled, and the other knee becoming affected, he had to give up in a short time.

About the middle of May, 1841, the whole family went to Seafeld house, near Lamblash in Arran. Here all the boys did a great deal of work under our father's supervision, and were very busy also working out their own ideas.

Somewhat late in the season we arranged a little trip in the steamer for a picnic to Loch Ranza. The Rev. Dr. King, of Glasgow, had come down for a day or two to the inn at Lamblash, and called the evening before. Hearing some of us talk of the proposed expedition for the next day, he asked to be allowed to join the party. It would have been ungracious to say "No," so it was agreed he should meet us on the quay in the morning. But he thought proper to come all the way out to the house, and was shewn into the dining-room where Anna and I had been packing the basket. I had gone up stairs to get ready, but she had lingered putting some finishing touches to our preparations, and from the window she got a glimpse of his approach. Not wishing to be seen, she darted into a store closet—such as were then common in connection with dining-rooms—shut the door, and kept peeping through the keyhole to see when he should be gone. But all were in the commotion of departure; and, as no one came, he sat still and she remained a prisoner. I shouted to her impatiently from the top of the stairs that she would be







ELIZABETH

*From a Pencil Drawing by herself  
Done for Dr. King at the time of their engagement*

late ; and, getting no response, I rushed down in my dressing-gown, comb and brush in hand, and hair tumbling about my shoulders, to see what she was after, and to my consternation I found the grave and reverend Doctor King waiting there alone.

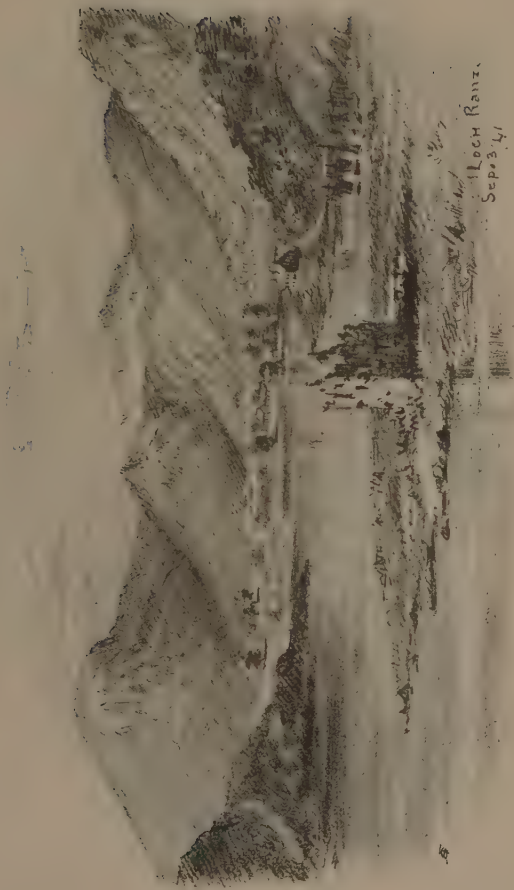
This might be called my first meeting with my future husband ; though I had seen him once some months before, when, not knowing any one was with my father, I went into the study to fetch out my painting which I had brought from the Museum to show at home. I saw a gentleman ; but, scarcely looking, I quickly retired with my picture. He, however, had noticed me ; and he told me afterwards that he said to himself that day, "Can it be that I have seen my future wife ?" All the long years that followed, up to the very last, he used often to tell me, that I shook my curls at him that day.

But this is a digression. Poor Anna having been compelled to emerge from her hiding place, and our bustling preparations being completed, we hurried in a body to the beach where the boys had already drawn down the

boat, and were eagerly watching for our appearance as the steamer was in sight. By dint of vigorous rowing and signalling we caught the captain's attention, and he paused a few moments to pick us up ; for before we could reach the quay he had started on his course.

It was one of those enchanting days, so well known in Scotland, that linger behind when summer is departing, and the air is clear and fresh, and a most delicate sunny haze adds beauty to earth and sea and sky without obscuring anything. The long sail to Loch Ranza was delightful ; the picnic on the grass went off gaily ; then the party scattered to ramble in different directions, but I remained to sketch the old castle that had been a retreat for Robert Bruce in bygone days. Dr. King said he did not want to walk, so he watched the progress of the sketch.

Late in the afternoon the steamer called for us. A breeze had sprung up, and Dr. King commiserated me very much for a transparent black lace bonnet that I wore, which he thought so slight a screen against the sharp air that he considered it necessary to sit near



# LOCH RANZA

*From Elizabeth's Pencil Sketch*

To face p. 194



me all the way, holding up his umbrella to protect me ; though I really did not feel any need of its shelter.

About the 20th of October our father set out with William for Cambridge to enter him at the University, and he took me part of the way with him, as I had been invited to spend some time with my cousin Caroline Oswald at her new home, Appleby Hall, in Lincolnshire. She had quite lately been married to Mr. Saltmarshe, a gentleman exactly three times her age, whom her father had appointed her guardian. We started very early in the morning in the mail coach for Carlisle, where we slept, and next day proceeded to Hull. In the afternoon we crossed the Humber in a funny little steamer, and a carriage was engaged to take me to Appleby Hall, a distance of from twelve to fourteen miles ; and then my father and William continued their journey to Cambridge. They had thought of going by sea from Hull to Ely at the mouth of the Cam, and went to the quay to inspect the little boat that plied between the places. It looked dirty and uninviting at first sight, and did not improve



on further acquaintance, for the cabins were close and offensive, and all the assurances of the captain that they were beautifully *hairy* and comfortable could not induce them to sail with him. They preferred the mail, and made their first entry into the old university town on the top of the coach.

It was twilight when I parted from them and began my solitary drive. Never shall I forget the brilliance of the stars that lovely night, or the dewy fragrance of the roses and mignonette filling the air as I approached the house, or the bright shining hall when the doors were flung open, or the warm welcome of my cousin, and her lively presentation of her guest to her elderly husband.

[In due course William's first letter from Cambridge arrived.

"ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, *Friday Evening.*

"MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—I am now fairly settled in my rooms in College. I was exceedingly fortunate in getting comfortable rooms at once, as most of the students do not get them till the second year. Papa left for Weedon this morning at seven, and intends going by Carlisle, unless the weather

improves very much with regard to wind. I am very sorry you did not come with us and see Cambridge, as it is a most beautiful place. I had no idea there were such fine gardens and grounds about the Colleges. Almost every College has a garden; and this College, which is one of the small ones, has a large garden with delightful walks. You might have got some beautiful sketches about Trinity College and its garden, through which the Cam, an exceedingly muddy and sluggish stream, flows. There is a long narrow walk behind Trinity, at the far end of which we see a church. I suppose you have heard of Porson's saying with regard to it (which Mr. Cookson my tutor, though himself a Fellow, told us) that it reminded him of a fellowship—a narrow dreary walk, with a church at the end of it.

The morning after we arrived we called on Mr. Cookson who shewed me apartments, and sent a man with my cap and gown to me. My suite of apartments consists of a parlour, a bedroom, and a gyp's room. He then took us to see different places of interest about Cambridge. He seems to be a very nice man, and he was very kind and attentive. I have heard since that he is very well liked as a tutor. He asked Papa to dine at the Fellows' table, and introduced me to a student who took me to the college table. Both Fellows and students dine in one large room, or hall as it is called.

Immediately after Papa went away, I removed to my rooms ; and after chapel—which is at eight for a few days till lectures begin—(but I hear the bell for evening chapel, and so I must quit for the present) I made my first attempt at preparing breakfast. I got on very well except that I forgot whether to put the coffee in after or before the water was boiling ; and also whether I should keep it any time boiling after the water is put in. In your first letter inform me of the necessary particulars.

To-day I have been getting things settled, walking about, and reading a little. Great numbers of tradesmen have been calling upon me (they find out the moment a new *man* comes into residence) and leaving their cards. One fashionable young man was particularly anxious to get me to put down my name as a subscriber to get my hair dressed—subscription 2/6 a term—very cheap. He said, “A great many have their names down. Mr. Phipps—(who lives in the same land or compartment marked H. with myself) has his. I should be very glad if you would let me put yours down, etc.” I however declined the tempting and advantageous offer, considering that previously my hair-dressing has cost me only 2d. the half-year hitherto.

As I have nothing more to say, I shall merely take the liberty of assuring you that I remain your affectionate brother, WILLIAM.

P.S. I forgot to mention that I have not yet received your letter and am very anxious to hear

whether you are safely arrived. Address all your letters to St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and they will reach me safely.

We called on Challis (the Professor of Astronomy, and observer, to whom Mr. Ramsay gave us an introduction), Gregory, and Hopkins, the last of whom we called on first. He recommends me not to have a tutor the first term. He will not teach me himself till my second year, but he will examine me now and then, and supply me with a tutor when I need one. He received us very kindly, and seems to be fond of Mr. Ramsay.

My breakfast and tea, besides coffee or tea, consist of a small loaf left by the gyp, and two or three cylinders of butter. He always comes in and lays the things, takes them away, and cleans them, etc.

Saturday morning, 8 o'clock.—I have just received your letter, and am very glad you have arrived safe and are well treated. I would have liked exceedingly to go, and your description makes me still more sorry that I did not go. It is, however, much better that we did not, as we could not have reached this till Thursday evening, and very probably not even then; which would have been much too late for a "fresh gentleman," to use the gyp's phrase. Indeed I hardly should have been able to get rooms. As it was we had considerable difficulty in procuring seats in the coach from Weedon, and it was only by my excellent management that Papa got an inside seat at all, without which we should not have gone. I got a seat

myself in the inside after Bedford, which is twenty-one miles from Cambridge. Excuse pencil as I am sitting toasting my feet at the fire before breakfast.”]

At first I enjoyed my new surroundings extremely. A beautiful horse was set apart for me, and we scoured the level country together for hours every day — Caroline mounted on a noble high-bred charger called Syntax. We stopped at no obstacle, but leaped fences and water-courses indiscriminately. Mr. Saltmarshe always, whatever the weather, went out shooting immediately after breakfast and did not return till dusk, often very wet and weary, but with a plentiful supply of game that kept the larder full.

Several people of distinction called, among them Lady Worsel, a beautiful young lady, daughter-in-law of the Earl of Yarborough, who, while she was staying with him, invited us all to spend a few days at his seat. Caroline and I would have liked immensely to go, but Mr. Saltmarshe could not be prevailed on to accept the invitation; nor would he go to a grand ball that had a great attraction for us. He liked home best,

where Caroline sang and played to him in the evenings, while he sat cosy in his armchair by the fireside, watching her bright face, and declaring she was brimming over with happiness. And I really think she was, though she would have enjoyed a little spree now and then.

[William's second letter from Cambridge concludes with a humorous allusion to the people of distinction who frequented Appleby Hall, and to the invitation of the Earl of Yarborough.

ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, *Wednesday Evening.*

"MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—I have been so very busy of late that I have not had time to write to you for a good while, and besides I have had to write some long letters to Papa, which occupied a good deal of time; and so now I have merely time to scribble (in the true sense of the word) a few lines before setting to work after tea . . . The word which you could not understand is *gyp*, noun substantive, a college servant, derived from the Greek word γυψ (gups) a vulture, from their ravenous disposition.

The dinner at the hall is nothing remarkable, consisting of substantial joints, and, if you pay





sixpence, about, additional, you can get sizings (*i.e.* pudding, or apple-pie, or something of that sort).

I have been getting on very comfortably as yet, and find the mode of life to be very pleasant. I have got no time to be dull, as I have got as much to do as I can possibly accomplish and a great deal more besides; that is, I may do as much as I please, as the quicker I get through with what I have to read the better. Lectures have now commenced, which take up some time both for preparation and the time of attendance, which is an hour a day. We have classics and mathematics day about.

I don't know whether I told you yet that I have joined the Union Society, which is for a joint stock library and reading-room. I find it to be a great resource both for getting books out to read, and for going there now and then to see newspapers and magazines. The library is a very good one, and contains a great many interesting books. The Union is also a debating society, but I have not gone to any of the debates yet, and I do not anticipate much interest in them.

Yesterday a very melancholy accident happened on the river. A student of Queen's College, in trying to shoot a fall of two or three feet in a boat, was drowned. The boat I believe was completely smashed. He had been warned not to attempt going down, but he madly persisted in attempting



to do a thing which I suppose nobody had ever tried before. He had just left home three or four weeks.

I was very glad to hear from your last letter you are enjoying yourself so much, and have at last found your true position with regard to society, and I hope to hear more, and remain, Your affectionate brother, WILLIAM."

A third letter received at Appleby ran as follows :—

"PET. COLL., CAM., *Tuesday Evening.*

"MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—I am quite ashamed of having been so long writing to you, but have only to plead my old excuse of having no time; and it is certainly no mock excuse, as I have an immense quantity of business on hand.

I received some time ago your last letter, containing the description of the rabbit hunting, with which I was greatly amused and edified. I hope you will soon write me another description of anything you please, and be sure and do not confine yourself (as I am doing now) to one sheet of note paper. Though I dislike crossing, yet I like long letters and recommend them to you both by precept and example.

I adventured myself to-day for the second time in a funny (or funey, or funney), *i.e.* a boat for one or two people to row in. It is certainly rather a venture to go in them as we can hardly stand

upright in them for fear of upsetting them, they are so very light and narrow. I can manage it quite well however ; and, besides, I would not care for an upset except for my watch and the disgrace. In this college and in all the others there is a boat club, which has one or more eight-oared racing boats, which go out very frequently to practise the crews for the races. Our boat goes out every day, and will be at the head of the river in the next races, now that I have come here, though it was far from it before. I have not joined the club, however, as rowing for the races is too hard work for getting on well with reading ; and besides, the men connected with the club are generally rather an idle set. It is rather a remarkable fact that whenever a college begins to do well at the examinations, its boat is sure to rise correspondingly, which is quite the case with our college just now.

I have got a good many acquaintances now, and among them no fewer than three Fellows of Trinity—Gregory, Tom Taylor, and Archibald Smith, the latter of whom, along with Gregory, called on me when he was in Cambridge at the installation of Whewell.

Paper failing I must close, by assuring you that I remain your most affectionate brother,

WILLIAM.

P.S. When do you return home? Will you take Cambridge on your way?"]

By-and-bye I began to weary, and a hooting owl in a plantation near my windows kept me awake at night, till at last I grew so nervous I longed to be off; but I did not see my way. We were engaged to spend Christmas and New Year's time at Saltmarshe, the mansion of the eldest son of the family, where there were many young people, and where the festivals were kept with great splendour and with all the old-fashioned observances. I liked the prospect; but it was long to wait for its fulfilment, with the disturbing owl screeching in the darkness, and driving away all sleep. I used often to get up in the night, place a table and chair before the fire, and set about drawing.

At length about the middle of December, I became too nervous and miserable to be able to stay; I *had* to go though I had no escort, and someone was to have come for me later. Mr. and Mrs. Saltmarshe were both vexed and disappointed, but they were very kind and made every possible arrangement for my comfortable travelling. As it had been settled that I should visit Belfast before going home, Liverpool was my destination, and I was

invited to spend a week there at Dr. Ramsay's in passing. By this time there was railway communication between Hull and Liverpool, so the journey was comparatively easy. But as there was a change at Birmingham, Mr. Saltmarshe wrote to a friend requesting him to meet me there, and take me across the town from station to station, and Dr. Ramsay was to receive me in Liverpool. Everything seemed smooth and pleasant, but alas ! "The best laid schemes of mice an' men gang aft a-gley."

It was very wintry when I took my departure. The country was covered deeply with snow and the roads unfit for the carriage driving to Hull, so it was decided I should go to a point on the Humber only four or five miles distant at which a Hull steamer stopped if signalled for. My conveyance was a covered van, kept by Mr. Saltmarshe for such contingencies, and the groom was sent to attend me, and see me fairly off in the train. Long before daylight all the farewells were said ; and, with a good deal of sorrowful and perturbed feeling, and not a little penitence for the trouble and vexation I had

caused, I set out on my adventurous journey. As we dragged through the snow I saw the sun rise red over the broad white plain, emblazing all the cloudy sky before his disk appeared above the horizon, and his dazzling beams shot across the dreary landscape. We were just in time for a little boat to take us out to the steamer, and I was enjoying the wintry sail on deck, when a pig fell overboard, and the captain stopped to rescue it. The operation was tedious, for the stupid animal struggled, and plunged, and eluded the grasp of its friends, and it was long before the boat was got under weigh again. All speed was then made, but when we arrived at Hull the train was gone, and no telegraph existed in those days to explain matters to expectant friends. It was quite dark long before Birmingham was reached, and I felt very disconsolate when I found myself all alone on the platform. A guard, noticing my forlorn condition as I stood there not knowing what to do, kindly looked after my luggage, and put me into an omnibus that plied between the stations. In my gratitude for his welcome aid, I gave him a guerdon for

his trouble that surprised him and brought forth a sort of fatherly remonstrance ; all the same his hand closed on the coin and dropped it into his pocket. It was about ten when I arrived at Liverpool ; and here again I found myself alone, and obliged to be indebted to a guard—thanks to the pig !

## CHAPTER XVIII

### CLOSE OF THE OLD LIFE

My round of visits ended, I was very glad to find myself once more in my own happy home about the middle of February.

After my return there was a good deal of gaiety in Glasgow—two or three balls in the Assembly Rooms, and dances in friends' houses, besides many dinner parties to which Anna and I went with our father, and several in our own house which we liked best of all. Some of them stand out bright and strong in my memory; one in particular—at which Dr. Nichol, Mr. Maconachie, and Professor Ramsay were among the guests—was quite delightful for the brilliancy of the conversation, and the sparkle of the wit that was tossed round the table from one to another. “Right and left its arrows flew.” But they were no poisoned arrows; they were tipped



with fun and kindliness. On another occasion a curious revelation was made. A certain nobleman, who shall be nameless, and a well-known and wealthy shipbuilder, were of the party. The latter, during a little pause, abruptly addressed the nobleman who sat nearly opposite.

"My lord," he said, "I have had the pleasure of seeing you before, and doing you a little service; but I hardly think you recognise me." "I am very sorry," his lordship replied, "but I must confess I cannot recall having ever met you." "I know you can't," was the answer, "but I can help you to remember. You can't have forgotten your hasty drive to Gretna Green one day, nor your trouble when one of your horses cast a shoe and your runaway race was suddenly stopped. Well, I'm the smith that shod your horse, and sent you on your way rejoicing."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [These bright, lively dinners were characteristic of the College household for two generations. The last such occasion on which the then surviving brothers and sister were assembled (except Robert, who had long ago gone to Australia) was in December 1891, when my mother was visiting Lord Kelvin in the new University. Both the brothers, James and William, were pro-

[Another letter from William belongs to this period.

“ST. PETER’S COLL., *March 6th*, 1842.

“MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—I received your acceptable letter on Wednesday morning and read it with great pleasure. . . . I am afraid the tea which you poured out for me will be cold before I come to drink it, though the time is approaching when I shall leave Cambridge and reading for a while to see how all goes on at home. Has it been settled yet what place we are to go to in summer? The bright mornings which we have now (and of which the present is a glorious specimen) put me in mind of the fine summer mornings in Arran; and the race round the College

fessors in Glasgow; William having occupied the Chair of Natural Philosophy since 1846, and James having been appointed to that of Engineering in 1872, when the constant and intimate companionship of boyish days was resumed, and continued to the end. My mother writes:—“We had a lively dinner yesterday; Uncle James and Uncle William were very bright, and it was very amusing and interesting. The question of the franchise for women, and the action of New Zealand in the matter, arose, and Uncle James referred to Anacreon’s opinion of women. Uncle William challenged him to quote, and Uncle James recited the ode in Greek, and then translated for the benefit of the unlearned. It enumerated the gifts of the gods to various creatures,—as the lion, the horse, etc.,—to Man, courage, power, and wisdom; to Woman, beauty, which is stronger than all, and can vanquish all. There was a great deal of the gaiety and wit of the College parties in the olden time that I remember so well.” The beloved brother James died in the following May, 1892.—E. T. K.]

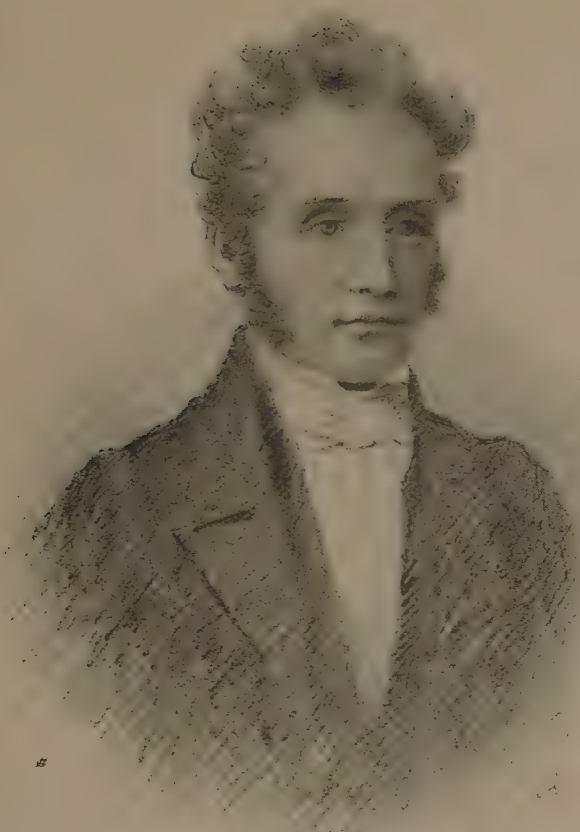
grove, which I take every morning before breakfast, calls to recollection our morning walks in St. James's Park.

Is there any prospect of any of you paying Cambridge a visit this year? I am sure you will be very much delighted with the groves and walks, and the trees which are already beginning to get green. The birds also (to use the Cambridge phrase) are beginning to sing like *bricks*, and the nightingales, of which there are a great many in our grove, will soon be commencing operations.

How have you enjoyed your visit to Belfast? How is James? And how do his inventions go on? He has quite made his *début* in the scientific world and seemingly with great success.

Matter failing, and as I must go out and have a walk this glorious morning, I remain, your affectionate brother, WILLIAM."']

About this time Dr. King began to call at the house pretty often to enquire how students of his Church were getting on. He had always been much interested in the students, especially in their moral and religious welfare, and he regularly held a weekly class for them in his own lecture hall, which was largely attended during the college session. But from the beginning of this year he showed himself



THE REV. DAVID KING, LL.D.

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth done at the time of their engagement*



much concerned about their progress and general behaviour in the mathematical class. As his calls were on business with my father, he was naturally shown into the study ; and, all enquiries being fully answered, after a little further talk there was nothing for it but to take his leave. At last he chanced to come a little earlier one evening, and tea being ready my father invited him to come up to the drawing-room with him. After this he always called at the earlier hour. Then his sisters made a formal call, and an invitation for Anna and me and our father to an evening party at his mother's house followed, which was accepted. The party was grave and solemn, composed of magnates of the congregation. His sisters, though not very much older than myself, wore curious, old-fashioned caps. Altogether it was exceedingly different from anything I had been used to ; for instance, the company sat in a regular circle all round the room, and never rose from their seats ; while Dr. King walked about in the centre talking to one and another, and telling anecdotes for the benefit of all. I thought it rather dull, I must say.

All this time I had not a notion that Dr. King was thinking particularly of me ; and I was very much surprised indeed when, one forenoon about the first of March, my father came up to the drawing-room, and said Dr. King had been with him and had requested that he should himself give me a letter, which he put into my hand, and then he left the room. I was utterly unprepared for such a letter. In reply I wrote to Edinburgh, whither Dr. King had gone for the meeting of the Synod, giving him no hope. I showed my letter to my father, and he cunningly said he would post it. And he posted it. But, unknown to me, he enclosed it in one from himself holding out a little encouragement, and saying he would be glad to see him at Knock Castle, where we were to spend the summer. On returning from the Synod Dr. King called and came up with my father to tea as usual, almost as if nothing had happened ; but when taking leave he said to me, "I'm coming down to try to storm and take the castle." I said, "You may come if you like to see my father ; but you cannot take the castle."





Knock. 1842.

# KNOCK CASTLE

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth*



I was a little angry. We left town not long after.

[A correspondence had, however, been agreed to, and before the summer was far advanced the castle had been stormed and taken. Deep, clinging love for the dear old home was the chief obstacle: but that could not very long stand in the way when the whole family felt as they did towards the interloper. "Should the matter terminate according to present appearances," the father wrote, "I should most deeply regret that there should be the slightest interruption of those friendly relations which have for some time subsisted between us, and which have been a source of great pleasure to every member of my family. With every one of them indeed, from the eldest to the youngest, there is but one common feeling towards you—that of great regard and esteem." And the letter is signed, "Your real friend, James Thomson."

*Letter from Elizabeth Thomson to Dr. King.*

"KNOCK, June 10, 1842.

"MY DEAR DR. KING,— . . . I am seated under the shade of a tree, in company with the

birds, and soothed by the murmur of a stream. All around is full of life and light and beauty. Existence is almost perfect enjoyment in such a scene on such a day. Pity it is not always summer, that the sun does not always shine ! But the grief is not without its comfort, for when the summer is gone, and the summer flowers are faded, we have winter with its cheerful fireside and its nice long evenings for domestic enjoyment. At home I am so happy, and have been so happy all my life, that I do not like to anticipate any change, and I cannot yet make up my mind to it. I sometimes regret that I promised to write, for I am afraid it is going too far—farther than I quite like. May be I will not do it again. . . . There is one important piece of information, however, that I must not forget to tell you—I am not out with my head uncovered. I have on a bonnet and cap and veil ; not, I assure you, because you desired it, but because I like it better myself ! ”

Another letter, undated, says :—

“ I am glad you are coming to Knock, but you must not talk on only the one subject. I am quite afraid of it. . . . From my former letter you will perceive that I am in great doubt—indeed I feel both afraid and sad when I contemplate the possibility of any change in my lot. At home I am so very happy. I think scarcely ever any one had so many blessings to be thankful for.”





KNOCK CASTLE, 1842

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth*

Shewing the dwelling house, connected with the ruin at that time, which  
was the summer retreat of Professor James Thomson and his family

Then comes the capitulation.

“KNOCK, *June 20, 1842.*

“. . . Looking forward the prospect now seems green and full of sunshine. . . . While I write the thunder is growling overhead and the rain is falling in torrents. For no one else would I give up the pleasure of watching the bolts in the sky, so I begin to think I must like you better than I thought I did. . . . I can scarcely believe it and yet so it is. I am now, Your ELIZABETH.”

“KNOCK, *August 20.*

“MY DEAR DAVID,—I hope we may have a few more evening walks at Knock before we bid it a last farewell. Hereafter we shall both, I am sure, often look back to the green fields and quiet lanes; and the old castle, and the sunsets, and the moonlight, will be among the visions we will love to recall. I am so glad all our recollections of this summer are bright and sunny. There has not been one clouded day when you were here.”]

William had returned from Cambridge to spend the vacation at home. He was very bright and happy, and we were proud and happy to have him among us again. He had been quite distinguishing himself in his studies, and a brilliant University career was



opening before him. He was also distinguishing himself as an oarsman. A nice, second-hand funny came in his way, which he did not lose the opportunity of securing. It was twenty-seven feet long, painted pale blue and bordered with a band of gilding. It was decked or covered all over, except a hole in the middle where the rower sat, and it was so light that William could carry it himself if need were. He called it the "Nautilus." He became as enthusiastic in boating as he was in everything he set about, and he won many prizes in the races. Like a jockey, he used to regulate his food so as to form good strong muscle without increasing his weight, and everything possible he did to obtain success in this direction, so that it used to be said he would run to the top of a steeple and cry "Bo!" if he could be assured that such a proceeding would be of use.

[Long after he used to be fond of talking about his boating in those Cambridge days; and when his sister was staying with him in the new college in Glasgow in 1892 she describes him "reposing in his arm-chair and

fighting his battles o'er again, and shewing how fields, or races, are won. A letter from an old fellow-student, Mr. Justice Denman, had sent him back to his undergraduate days, and he was telling with great glee of a race, or trial, which was rowed over and over again before Caius yielded to Peterhouse. When he himself won the Silver Sculls it was better, he declared, than winning an examination."]

James was at home very delicate, still suffering from his knee and able only for a little exercise in the garden or the immediate neighbourhood of the house. Our aunt, as usual in the country, was one of the family circle; and Anna and I worked and read a good deal with her, and I attended to Robert's lessons every morning while the three elder brothers were busy with their father. We were very happy all together. Dr. King came down almost every week for a day, returning to town next morning; and his sisters, as well as many other friends, visited us in these summer days. John and Ninian Thomson, sons of one of the professors, and favourite companions of my brothers, stayed with us

a good while. Dr. Cairns was with us at the same time, and one day a few friends were invited to dinner to meet him; but the lads dined early and set off to amuse themselves. While the grave party were sitting at dessert, William, looking wild and scared, rushed into the room, exclaiming, "John Thomson is carried round on the mill wheel!"

Most of the company ran to see what had happened. The boys, it seemed, had found the water turned off and the mill at rest; and the wheel having been left unsecured a tempting opportunity offered for trying what the punishment of the treadmill is like. They took it in turns and quite enjoyed it for a little, till John Thomson mismanaged somehow and was drawn down to the bottom. There he lay under the great wheel, motionless and apparently dead, his white face streaked with blood. I ran with all my might to summon the labourers employed on the estate. They were able to move the wheel, and then one of them, lowered by a rope, succeeded in bringing up the poor lad. Strange to say, it turned out he was not seriously hurt.

About the end of autumn, near the usual time for our return to the college, Robert took scarlet fever, and this caused the abrupt departure of all the family except myself. I stayed to take care of him as I was the only one who had had the disease.

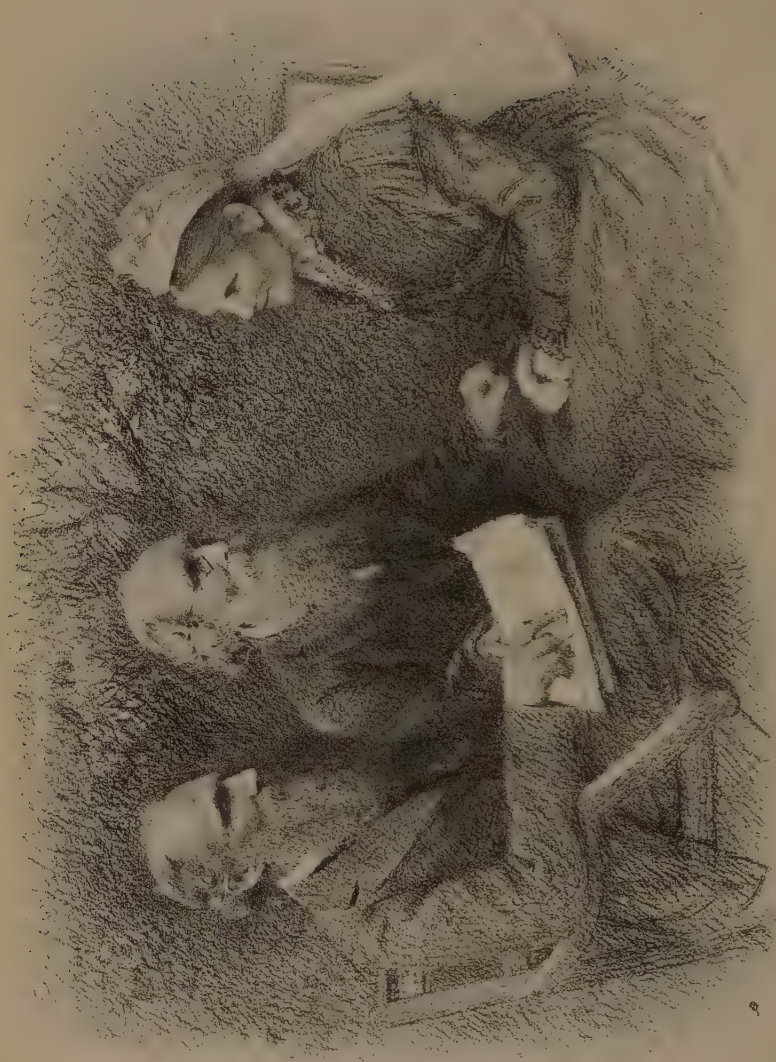
It was quite winter before we could venture to go home. The mountains were white down to the water's edge, which is a thing that rarely happens on the Frith of Clyde. I used to run down before breakfast every morning to bathe, brushing the snow from the evergreens as I raced along the steep winding path through the shrubbery to the seashore.

Only a short interval remained for me in the old college after we were all assembled in town; and each day rolled rapidly into the past, bringing the eventful one fixed for my marriage nearer and nearer.

And here, when about to quit the sweet home of my happy youth, I close these reminiscences with a heart filled with the deepest reverence, and the tenderest and most grateful

love, for the dear father who made it so sweet, and the gentle mother who cherished our early days ; and with humble thankfulness to the great God who gave us such parents.





LORD KELVIN

PROF. JAMES THOMSON, LL.D.

MISS ELIZABETH KING

THE BROTHERS AND SISTER IN AFTER LIFE



## CHAPTER XIX

### AFTERWARDS

BY ELIZABETH THOMSON KING

My mother's marriage in no way loosened the old ties. When, after a fortnight's trip, her husband brought her to her new home in Hanover Street, Glasgow, she found her father, her aunt, her sister, and her four brothers, together with her two sisters-in-law, all waiting there to welcome her. According to an ancient Scotch custom, an oaten-cake was broken over her head as she entered, and a poker put into her hand to symbolize her sovereignty over the fireside, and amidst the happy family gathering she at once entered on her duties as hostess.

How very youthful her appearance was at this time may be judged from the pencil drawing she did of herself for my father

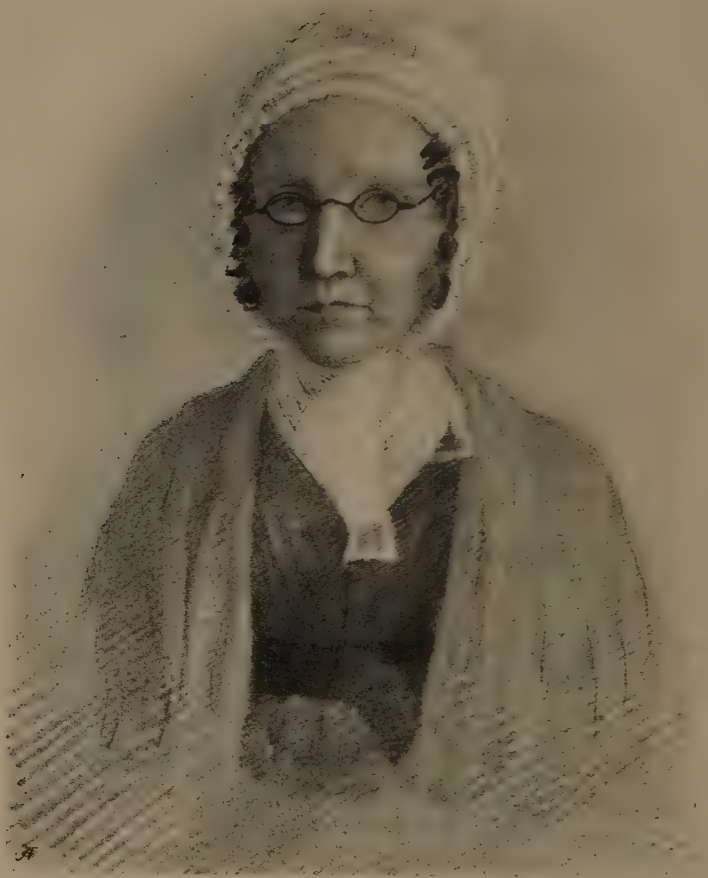
during the period of her engagement ; and its testimony is corroborated by the tradition that when her father was taking her up to Glasgow from Largs to see about her wedding outfit, the captain of the Clyde steamer refused to accept any fare for her, saying, " Naething for the wee lassie ! "

The new life was much quieter and more sedate than the old, and the young bride missed the gaiety to which she had been used, and, most of all, the merry gallops with her brothers and sister up and down the long college drawing-room of an evening.

Sometimes, when her husband was sitting absorbed in his studies, a barrel-organ would strike up its lively tunes in the street outside, and at the sound of a waltz or a quadrille, she could not restrain herself, but would spring to her feet and begin to dance. Then he would look up quietly from his book with a fond, admiring smile ; the after-glow of which never failed to light up his face when telling his children about their mother's young days.

Not long after the marriage a dance was given at her father's house, and her brothers were keen that she should be present at it.





DR. KING'S MOTHER

*From a Pencil Drawing by Elizabeth after her marriage*

But the code on such matters was rather rigid among Scotch ministers, and she doubted whether, as a minister's wife, it would be considered proper for her to go. So she decided that she would not, unless her husband testified his approval by accompanying her. And not only did he do so, but his mother with her own hands hemmed the frills, and ran the tucks, of the muslin frock worn by the young wife on the occasion ; thus making the evening altogether one of joy and light-heartedness, and winning the life-long gratitude and love of her daughter-in-law, who had till then been a little afraid of the quiet, serious old lady. Many a time have we heard the story of that frock, and it has made us, too, love the grandmother whom we never knew.

The intercourse between the old home and the new was constant and happy. The brothers were welcome at Hanover Street at all hours of the day, and William's step was well known, bounding up the stairs two steps at a time. He never waited to be announced, but made his way from room to room in search of his sister, pulling up the blinds to the very top in each room as he went along,

to the detriment of the carpets and curtains. But he always loved light and sunshine, and could not bear to see them excluded for the sake of any furniture, however fine. If my mother happened to be out, she knew at once he had been there by the state of the blinds on her return. By and bye, when there came to be a nursery, he was sure to find his way there, and the sound of his springing footstep was greeted by a shout of welcome, and a scamper of little feet. He gave us our first and only "Strewel Peter," which has now served three generations of eager students, and is still in use, and still intact. One of my earliest baby-memories is of being taken by my mother to the old College house and left with Uncle William in his study, while she went to do some shopping or other business. I still can feel the soft Turkey carpet as I crept about round his feet and pulled his slippers off and on in supreme content, without apparently disturbing in the least his deep ponderings over the laws of the universe. I needed no attention; to be with Uncle William was happiness enough. He was always fond of little children, and liked their company, and

they were drawn to him as by a magnet. A small nephew and niece were kept proud and happy by the hour, helping him to arrange his examination papers. With the simple directions from him, "Put this in this pile, and this other in that pile," the work went on steadily and methodically. The little people enjoyed it far more than any game, and a word of praise at the end was stored in their memories as a great treasure. He, too, was very happy ; for in a letter written many years later he dwells affectionately on the recollection of those days.

But all this was when he had been long established in the professorship of Natural Philosophy, and many things both glad and sad had happened in the old home before then.

First, Anna had been married to William Bottomley (whom she had met for the first time on that stormy night at Grindelwald), and had gone to live at Fort Breda, near Belfast ; and it was while her aunt was visiting her there, in 1845, that the well known and much discussed results of the Cambridge tripos examination of that year came out.



That William's preparation had not interfered with healthful exercise, and that he had also found time for the enjoyment of music—which through life was one of his chief delights—we learn from a letter dated “St. Peter's College, Nov. 6th, 1844.”

*W. T. to E. K.*

“I have as usual got into the Cambridge routine of reading, boating, &c., and among other things I bathe tolerably regularly before breakfast in the river, along with a party which about this time is becoming large. To-morrow morning we intend taking a coal fire down with us, and putting it in the middle when we are dressing.

I have very little time now for practising the cornopean, and make no progress at present; but, knowing Blow very well, I still manage to hear a good deal of fine music. Blow is now conductor of the Musical Society, which is going on with great vigour. The performers are getting too proud for quadrilles and waltzes, with which, of course, the Society commenced, and they are now to give us only Symphonies and Overtures.”

When the result of the examination was published there was a good deal of consternation in the family, because William had failed to obtain the Senior Wranglership; but he

himself wrote calmly enough about it, his chief concern being for his father's disappointment :

“ST. PETER'S COLLEGE,  
*Mon., Jan. 20, 1845.*

“MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—I have this moment received your letter with congratulations on my approaching triumph, which is now past. Though it was not perfectly satisfactory, yet it was quite well enough, as I never relied much on examinations nor built many hopes on them. Of course the only thing I care in the least about is the effect on my future prospects, and I think my place will do well enough in that respect, at least as far as regards a fellowship here, and, I hope, for the professorship in Glasgow also.

I have no more time, as I must look over a few things for to-morrow's paper, as I am now in the middle of the examination for Smith's prizes.

Yr. Affecte. brother,

WILLIAM THOMSON.

*P.S.*—The principal thing that I care about in the result of the examination is the disappointment which I am afraid Papa must feel, as I am afraid he had rather raised his hopes about it; though I tried to keep him from expecting too much before the examination, as I knew the uncertainty. Will you write to me and tell me what he has said? I suppose he will write, but I should like to hear from you what he thinks.”

Aunt Agnes gives vent to her feelings on the occasion in a characteristically impulsive letter :

“FORT BRED A, Jan. 24, 1845.

“MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—I received your letter at 4 o'clock, and I most fully sympathize in your feelings about William. I am most *desperately* disappointed that he has not taken the place that I am sure he is entitled to, and which I think he has only lost from scattering his exertions over too wide a range. I am not consoled to learn that so and so, and so and so, stood second. I expected him to stand first, and the only thing that reconciles me is the conviction that *we* all needed this mortification.”

Very soon, however, came the comforting tidings that though only Second Wrangler, William was First Smith's Prizeman, and Anna wrote to her sister from Fort Breda on Jan. 31, 1845 :—

“I have been looking rather impatiently for another letter from you since the last most delightful news about William arrived, as I long to know what you think of it. I don't know when I have heard anything that gave me such delight. I had been trying as much as possible to reconcile myself to his having lost the Senior Wranglership, and to bear the disappointment philosophically ; but now the extreme joy I feel at his having won at last, shows me that in spite

of all my philosophy I had felt it far more than I would admit. I wish I could have seen Papa when the second accounts came,—and you, and all at home.

Tell me about William's movements. In his letter to me he only says he will very soon start for Paris. With what a light happy heart he would leave Cambridge after his success! and he will look back on his whole College course now with much brighter feelings than he could have done had it ended in disappointment. I never saw more modest, unassuming letters than he writes "

The next important event in the family history was the appointment of William to the Chair of Natural Philosophy in the Glasgow University. It was an occasion of great rejoicing to all, and especially to his father, who was getting frail, and who now had the joy of seeing his young son associated with himself as his fellow-professor at the early age of twenty-two. There are a number of letters written at the time which dwell touchingly on his emotion.

*David King to Elizabeth King.*

"GLASGOW, Sep. 12, 1846.

"When I came up to Glasgow yesterday I was just in time to receive the joyful tidings of William's unanimous and cordial appointment to the Chair of

Natural Philosophy ! The first announcement I had on the subject was your father's face as he came out of the Hall where the election had been conducted. A countenance more expressive of delight was never witnessed. The emotion was so marked and strong that I only fear it may have done him injury. . . . I hope and pray that, happy as the event is to William and all his relatives and connexions, it may be happiest of all to the college of which he is doubtless to prove himself a distinguished ornament."

After the election was over father and son went down together to Largs, where the family was spending the summer at Knock as of old. My mother was there also, occupying a house not far off, and she responds to my father's letter :—

" LARGS, *Sep.* 14, 1846.

" It is indeed most joyful for us all that William has been so successful, and I hope his early promise may be followed by a long and honourable career. On looking at him I can hardly believe that so young a creature has already won such fame, and established himself in a situation so responsible. Papa's face continues to wear the same happy expression which you saw, but of course with less emotion and excitement. Yesterday I was out at Knock, and during the whole day every now and then a quiet, happy smile stole over his features, and he seemed quite full of enjoyment."

In announcing the news to her aunt, who was once more visiting Anna at Fort Breda, she again had her father uppermost in her mind. She says :—

“MY DEAREST AUNT,—This is a very happy evening to us all, for our father’s heart’s desire is now fulfilled. I wish Anna and you had been here that we might all rejoice together. It is delightful that William has been unanimously appointed. The whole thing is delightful! I think it will give health and strength to papa and tend to prolong his days.

William does not look in the slightest degree elated. He is perfectly composed. You would hardly think that it was he who had succeeded so brilliantly.

I am just at this moment left alone. I had the whole party drinking tea with me, William Bottomley included, and I could not tell you which looked the happiest.”

The next news we have of the professorship is not so enthusiastic.

*E. K. to D. K.*

“Nov. 3, 1846.

“William’s introductory lecture was delivered this morning, and, according to his own account, it was a total failure. I think he had been very nervous, and



he read much too fast. I have, however, heard no opinion but his own. He is very much disheartened, poor fellow."

But by the end of the session there was no room for doubt about the general verdict, as the following letters shew. A note of deep sorrow, however, now mingles with the pride and joy in William's success, and the letters wear a mourning border ; for during the interval the dearly loved young brother John had died of fever caught in the hospital. He had been distinguishing himself in his medical course, and was growing up into a beautiful manhood, full of earnest purpose, while at the same time his spirits overflowed with boyish fun.

The last time my mother saw him was on a merry evening at her father's house. He was conning the pages of *Punch*, and entertaining the family by reading extracts ; but he had such difficulty in restraining his laughter that he could scarcely make himself articulate, and sometimes the whole party would laugh in sympathy without knowing what was the joke. Two days later he was struck down by fever, and his delirious wanderings revealed the secret of a weekly prayer-meeting which, unknown



to his friends, he had formed among his fellow-students, and which he was in the habit of conducting.

His death was a terrible blow to his father, and a life-long sorrow and blank to his brothers and sisters.

*E. K. to D. K.*

*"Ap. 27, 1847.*

"William has concluded his lectures for this session, and his students presented him to-day with a complimentary address, to which he read an answer which he had prepared, having got notice beforehand that there was to be an address. It is delightful that he has got so well through his labours. Poor John was here to enjoy William's happy beginning, but his warm brotherly sympathy is wanting now. It is better to think of him as one of the cloud of witnesses who watch our progress in our course than to dwell on his bodily absence. Still we cannot but recollect with sorrow that all our affectionate intercourse on earth is past, and that we shall never, never meet again, as we used to do. I miss him very much when you are away, for he used to come daily in your absence to make me take a walk ; and this whole day I have started with every passing footstep, fancying for a moment that he was coming ; and then my heart beats and throbs with the thought that his feet will never again cross our threshold."

A few days later came William's first prize-giving, which recalls the occasion when, as little Willie, he was proudly conducted by his sister—well washed—to his first prize-*getting*. She now writes :—

“*May 1, 1847.*

“The prizes were distributed to-day, and William shewed to very great advantage. He was received with deafening cheers, beyond anything I ever witnessed on the noisy first of May. ‘The young Professor’ was cheered, and cheered again, and the students seemed never to tire of shouting ‘Three cheers more for the young Professor!’ And, best of all, the grave old Professors on the bench forgot their dignity, and joined in the applause with hands and feet.

William himself looked so young and so modest that it was really quite touching to see him. He spoke with great self-possession and distinctness, and, after giving his prizes, made a very short speech, and in it referred to the fact that he was concluding his first session. When he sat down the applause was renewed till one might have feared that the hall would have been endangered. Lord Meadowbank made a speech in which he said, he (William) had come from a Southern University laden with honours to shed a dazzling lustre on that with which he was now connected. I do not remember the words; they were like these, but better chosen.





THE RIVER KELVIN AND THE NEW GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

This would have been a very happy day to us all were not one of our number wanting, very dear to us all, and whose kind sympathy was almost more than brotherly. He rejoiced with William when he began his course, but he did not see its brilliant development. We all felt this very sad, and papa sometimes had great difficulty in overcoming his emotion. The last time I was in the Common Hall John received a prize for an essay,—on the ‘Food of Plants,’ I think,—and he was greatly pleased.”

A letter, dated fifty years later, and written to my mother at the time of Lord Kelvin’s Jubilee, reads almost like an echo of that first triumphal prize-giving. Brilliant promise had passed into achievement, and “the young Professor” had become a venerable old man ; but the child-heart was still there, and the feeling he inspired was still one of admiring love.

“GLASGOW, *June 16, 1896.*

“MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I can’t write much of a letter to-day just because we have been doing, and seeing, and thinking, and feeling so much which I long to tell you all about. How I wish you could have been here ! But it would have been too much for you, I am sure.

Uncle William looked quite lovely last night receiving all the thousands that came to shake hands

with him. He had a gentle, kind smile for each, and looked so simple and childlike in all his glory. Just to watch him was for me and for many the chief pleasure of the evening.

The function to-day—the capping—was still more interesting. You will read all about it in the papers, but they can hardly give you the *emotion* of the whole thing. Uncle William again was just beautiful. He received all the tributes offered to his genius, and the compliments to his character, so humbly and sweetly, and at the end made such a touching answer to them all. He seemed nearly to break down for a moment, but he got through, and everybody said he never spoke better. Some of us found it difficult not to be overcome, and I know you would have felt it too much.”

In 1848 my mother's health gave way, and she was ordered to pass the winter in Jamaica. Arrangements were made to allow my father to accompany her, and they sailed from Greenock on the 21st of October in the good ship “Trelawny.” The parting with her family was a very sad one, as there was not much hope entertained of meeting again in this world. Her brothers and sister went with the travellers to Greenock to see them safely on board, but her father was too much overcome, and his tender Goodbye was said at the

door of her own home. Her brother William was the last to wish them farewell, for he sailed with them as far as Ailsa, and returned with the tug to Greenock. The entry in her diary for that day is in his handwriting—as might be gathered from its nautical character—and is very different from anything she would have been likely to write herself under the circumstances.

*"Oct. 21, 1848.*

"... All bid us farewell, except William, who accompanied us, intending to return with the tug boat, and we started at a little before noon on a fine sunny morning with a light favourable breeze. As soon as we had passed Greenock various stay sails and fore and aft sails were set, and then several of the square sails, although the wind was so slight, that with the motion of the tug, they scarcely drew if at all. 1.30, David has just come down to say that the wind is improving in strength and direction. We have every chance of being soon out of the channel."

The winter that followed (1848-9) is memorable in Glasgow for a terrible visitation of cholera, which devastated the city. "Such times were surely never known before," wrote Mrs. Gall, "I know no family that is not



mourning the loss of some near and dear friend." And again, "The angel of death has covered this huge city with mourning, and time would fail me to tell by name even those known to me in a general way who have been carried off."

The second mail that reached Jamaica after the arrival of the "Trelawny" at Montego Bay brought crushing and utterly unexpected tidings.

*William Thomson to David King.*

"2 COLLEGE, GLASGOW,  
Friday Evening, Jan. 12, 1849.

"MY DEAR DAVID,—I have sad, sad intelligence to give you. We have lost our father. He died this afternoon at two o'clock."

Then follow details of the illness, with its ups and downs and alternating hopes and fears. The attack of cholera was not very severe and seemed to be overcome, but fatal prostration succeeded.

The letter continues :—

"James and I were excessively busy preparing some papers relative to the motive power of heat, which I took to Edinburgh on Tuesday the 2nd, to

read at the Royal Society. After dining at the Royal Society Club (of which Prof. Forbes had got me elected a member), and reading the papers, I returned on a bitterly cold night by the 10 o'clock train to Glasgow. I found papa in good spirits and doing well. During the whole week he was anticipating news from Jamaica on Sunday—*hoping* we should hear. I had been reading aloud to him every day after dinner for an hour since the Friday or Saturday of the preceding week, from the newspapers or from *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, and he quite enjoyed it. On the Sunday night he became delirious, and since that time he has been gradually sinking in strength. I could not believe last night at this time that we were to lose him. . . . But God has ruled it for the best, and has tried us with a heavy affliction. . . . Aunt came for me at 3 or 4 this morning, and with her and James I have watched by his bedside almost all the time till the end. I never felt anything so much as the touching manner in which he called for Elizabeth and Anna. Thinking they were round him he was satisfied. . . . Then he burst out rather faintly into a very incoherent set of expressions of numbers in all varieties of arithmetical denominations, hurrying rapidly from one to another, and giving the answer or saying 'That's right! Now, what is seven hundred and eighty-six inches equal to?' and so on for several minutes. His mind was wandering back to the school times 20 or 30 years ago! . . . He uttered no more, but, breathing heavily, although

showing no symptoms of pain, he became weaker and weaker. . . . It is a terrible and irreparable loss, and a sad void is now left. . . . We are now looking forward with much anxiety to the news which we expect the first mail, arriving this day week, will bring. We are afraid that your voyage must have been rather longer than usual from there being no letter from you yet. Poor Elizabeth will indeed require your consolation.

Yr. affectionate brother,

WILLIAM THOMSON."

The longed-for letter from my mother came at last, and brought some comfort to the mourning household; for it told of a prosperous and happy voyage, and by its tone of cheerful and light-hearted enjoyment gave promise of restored health and strength. It was addressed to her father, and its very gaiety added to the tender concern felt for her by the other members of the family.

Her aunt wrote :—

"GLASGOW, *Jan. 30, 1849.*

"MY DEAREST ELIZABETH,—I am constantly calculating the time when you must receive the sad intelligence which William's letter to Dr. King conveyed. I do not feel very able to console you, but I can well

weep with you. You have lost a father such as few have ever been blessed with. . . . The night before he died he thought both you and Anna were beside him, and it would be quite impossible for words to express the earnest depth of affection which filled his whole soul. He mostly thought that I was you, and, extending his arms to me, he said, 'Elizabeth ! Elizabeth Thomson ! Oh it is a dear name.'

I need not say how happy your letter made us all, and yet how sad to think that the heart to which it was addressed had ceased to beat."

Anna had come over from Belfast, but too late to see her father alive. She wrote to her sister from the old College home :—

*" Feb. 14, 1849.*

"In the midst of the deep grief which we have been suffering here, nothing could have done so much to cheer us as the good accounts your letters contain of your health. To all of us the high spirits in which you write are both cheering and melancholy, and it is impossible to read your letters without deep sorrow in the thought that your happiness must so soon be dashed from you, and the gloom of death thrown over everything. . . .

Since the first dreadful day when the news reached me, I have never ceased to pray that you might be prepared for the sad blow, and I trust that our

prayers for you will be heard, and that God will bless you. . . . For myself, my great desire is that I may be strengthened by this sorrow to the more earnest performance of my duty, and that with God's help I may be to my children what he was to us, and that if I live to see them grow up, they may love me with a love equal to the love we had for our father.<sup>1</sup> At first I thought my heart would break at parting so suddenly from him, but I am very calm now, and my great delight is to count over his virtues and his goodness, and to remember his long-suffering kindness. . . . When I gazed on his beloved face, calm and beautiful as in the happiest sleep, the first ray of comfort entered my soul. I felt that in the recollection of one so calm and so gentle and so good, all clamorous grief must be laid aside, and that the greatest honour I could pay to his beloved memory was to try to live worthy of such a father. I cannot always retain this feeling, and a terrible sadness steals over me whenever I am left alone. But I try to look at the bright side of the picture, and to keep it before me that though we may meet no more on earth, we shall all still be united again a happy little family in heaven."

Thus the story of the old paternal home closes with a hopeful glance forward into the

<sup>1</sup> Anna did not very long survive her father. She died about eight years later.

far future, when after fifty-eight years the last member of that happy family was gathered to his rest, and through the arches of Westminster Abbey rang the anthem, "He will swallow up death in victory."





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